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A great adventuress

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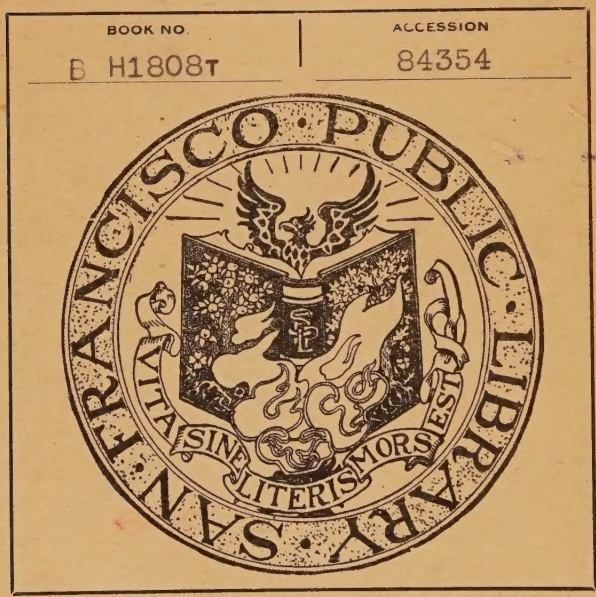

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A GREAT ADVENTURESS

LADY HAMILTON AND THE REVOLUTION IN NAPLES (1753-1815) BY JOSEPH TURQUAN AND JULES D'AURIAC WITH FRONTISPIECE IN PHOTOGRAVURE AND 16 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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AT THE MERCAT PRESS, EDINBURGH

INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

FASCINATED by the extraordinary adventures and charming personality of the beautiful Lady Hamilton, we were prompted to endeavour to discover fresh material about her, and in this we have been fortunate, as the following pages will show.

We have striven to deal fairly with a woman who has been at one and the same time so much idealised and so basely culumniated ; but we found it impossible to place her upon a pedestal of virtue. What we have written has at least the merit of being absolutely impartial, we are unbiassed by the national prejudice that our lovely heroine was the great Nelson's Emma.

Apart from Lady Hamilton herself, the English public may be inclined to regard certain of our conclusions as two obviously 'French,' notably what we have said about Nelson. We may be judged harshly ; but, if so, the judgment will not be a just one. A century has elapsed since the days of the heroic struggle between Great Britain and France, and the momentous events that caused two great nations to rise up against each other. To-day there is not a single sensible Frenchman who harbours feelings of hatred against Pitt, Nelson or Wellington ; but history has her rights, and we considered it our duty to examine mercilessly the great man and hero who

was so intimately connected with Lady Hamilton's life. We have found him cruel by nature, insubordinate towards his superiors, the adversary, not only of the liberal views that do honour to England; but of all that did not proceed from the Divine Right. Most of these grave defects we consider are accounted for by the fact that Nelson sprang from an inferior class of society, a circumstance that drew him closer to Lady Hamilton, who was the daughter of a cook and a blacksmith. No doubt every British heart will protest against the assertion that Nelson, the son of a clergyman and the god-child of Horace Walpole, was not a gentleman! In support of this severe judgment, it must be remembered that the conqueror at the Nile and Trafalgar, went to sea at the early age of twelve, consequently before he had time to pursue any serious studies. At the critical moment when the soul begins to shape itself, he was thrown into the society of rough sailors. He seldom returned home. He cared not at all for books, and he was not only ignorant of the Classics; but knew very little about history and philosophy. He could not speak any tongue but his own. These facts have been gathered from the works of innumerable English writers and not from the writings of his enemies.

Nelson sometimes showed strange tastes and habits. He would, for instance, empty the last drop from his glass on to his finger-nail. He was guilty of unpardonable duplicity in the capitulation of Naples. These were not the characteristics of an English gentleman.

We have endeavoured to present in this volume a minute and thorough psychological study, worked

out on entirely new lines. Our object has been to make our account interesting and one which, we hope, will appeal to those readers who find pleasure in reading of men and women who have influenced the destines of bygone generations.

Joseph Turquan
Jules d'Auriac

THE publishers desire to express their thanks to those who have helped with the illustrations, including Lord Michelham, Sir Robert Harvey, Bt., Sir Ernest Cassel, G.C.B., Tankerville Chamberlayne, Esq., Messrs. Duveen Brothers, and particularly to Mrs Frankau (Frank Danby) whose kind help has been invaluable.

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A GREAT ADVENTURESS
LADY HAMILTON AND THE REVOLUTION IN NAPLES

A GREAT ADVENTURESS

CHAPTER I

Early days of Emma Lyon—Her ancestry—Date of birth—Education —Becomes a nurse-maid—Her various situations—Her taste for romances and theatres—Her first adventure—Her second and third adventures — Dr Graham — Charles Greville — Romney — Sir William Hamilton—Emma at Parkgate—Greville is ruined—He plans to pass Emma on to his uncle—Negotiations—Emma departs for Naples.

LADY HAMILTON was the daughter of Henry Lyon, a blacksmith, and of Mary Kidd, a cook. Most of her mother's relatives were sea-faring men or labourers. Thus according to documents, she was the offspring of very lowly people. It has, however, been asserted that she was the child of a nobleman who abandoned her mother immediately after Emma's birth. If this statement were true, it would give the key to her not very complicated nature. The father's blood would account for her love of art, elegance, luxury, and comfort, her ambition to achieve social—if not moral—success, as well as the selfishness and want of feeling which she showed at a very early age. Again, her beauty and wonderful physical charm, her love of pleasure and extravagant ways were the inheritance of an aristocratic race. From the mother came a certain quaint, rough-and-ready manner, and the peasant's characteristic greed for money, together with his strength and cunning—in a word, all the practical, matter-of-fact side of her nature which revealed itself especially during the latter part of her life. This would account for Emma's many inconsistencies.

There are, however, no means of ascertaining the truth of her alleged parentage. It is one of those things that are incapable either of proof or of refutation.

Writers do not agree as to the date of her birth, nor does it matter to history whether Emma Lyon was born in 1761 or in 1764. Mr Walter Sichel* believes her to have been born on April 26, 1765. His opinion is based solely on the child's baptismal certificate, which is worded: "Emy, d^r^ of Henry Lyon, Smith of Ness, by Mary his wife. May 12, 1765." That is all. There are no signatures, the father and mother could but make their marks.

In her death certificate (January 15, 1815), Emma is said to be fifty-one years of age. If this statement be correct, the year 1763 would be the real date of her birth. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say whether any reliable document furnished proof of her age as quoted in the death-certificate. It is possible that Emma made herself out to be younger than she really was by giving, throughout her life, the date of her baptism as that of her birth. It may also be remarked that, if the child had been born on April 26, 1765, the mother would scarcely have been able to attend the infant's christening on the following May 12.

In her valuable study† Mrs Hilda Gamlin makes no more definite statement, but says that Emma was probably born in the year 1765. M. Fauchier-Magnan‡ has since proved, almost beyond doubt, that Emma first saw the light of day in 1763.

The child never knew her father, for he died a few days after signing the parish register (June 21, 1765).

The mother, who was the daughter of a countryman living near Hawarden, in Flintshire, being left unprovided for by the death of her husband, returned with the child to her father's home.

Training and education Emma had none. Brought up in the country, she had in her childhood no more school-

* *Emma, Lady Hamilton*, by Walter Sichel, 1907.

† *Emma, Lady Hamilton*, by H. Gamlin, 1891.

‡ *Lady Hamilton*, by A. Fauchier Magnan, 1910.

ing than any other country girl. In later years, however, when she had become the wife of the English Ambassador, she used to say that a certain Lord Halifax had provided generously for the expense of her education, and it is true that this nobleman played a part in her early childhood. He seems to have been the protector of Mary Lyon, whose charm or whose wiles had captivated him. He it was, she said, who undertook to provide for her childhood, and from this it might be inferred that he was really her father; but he can hardly be said to have undertaken her education, if for no other reason than that it was not undertaken at all.

However that may be, Emma's education—if education it can be called—was not only rudimentary, for she does not seem to have profited by it, but brief, for at the age of thirteen, according to the *Memoirs** published under her name, she took a situation as nursemaid in the house of Horatius Leigh Thomas, brother-in-law to Boydell, the celebrated engraver.

Moral development in later years depends almost entirely on the early education and instruction that we receive during childhood. Emma had neither education nor instruction. She had none to guide or direct her, or to furnish her with sound principles, for her mother, being possessed of none, could not impart them. Besides, the children of the lower classes are left to grow unheeded like the wild grass on the roadside. They go their own way and none heed them; none dream of putting them on their guard or arming them against the difficulties that await them, for none care. When still a mere child, in the very springtide of her youth, Emma became a serving-maid, and was thrown defenceless on the London streets. From the very outset she was exposed to vice of every kind, and perverted by the examples that surrounded her. All this must be taken into consideration if we would judge aright the parts played in her life by circumstance and her own caprice.

* *Memoirs*, published in Paris 1816. Mrs Gamlin says Emma was twelve years old. It seems more probable that she was fourteen.

The young girl had at first the good fortune to enter a highly respectable household. "Mistress Thomas was in every way a desirable mistress for young Emma, and though she exercised her control over the giddy girl, and held her exuberant spirits in check, she retained her love and respect to the last hour of her life. When her little serving-maid had attained an elevated position on the rung of the social ladder, she frequently sent her former mistress evidences of affection, which are still in the possession of the descendants and relatives of Mr and Mrs Thomas, and are highly regarded as heirlooms by their owners."*

The peaceful monotony of a respectable, middle-class establishment was not likely to prove congenial to Emma's exuberant and unruly disposition. It is not easy to say whether she would have prolonged her stay in this excellent household. As it happened, her mother decided to go to London, and took her daughter away. She got her another situation in the house of Linley, who, at the time, was part owner of Drury Lane Theatre.

The little maid had wept bitterly on leaving Hawarden, but her tears soon ceased when she found herself in the great capital. "London scenes and life had a very bad effect on the country maid, and her giddiness caused much annoyance and anxiety to Mrs Thomas, who was a strict and religious woman."†

In Mr Linley's house the conversation constantly turned upon musical and theatrical matters, and in these, not unnaturally, the shrewd child soon took a keen interest. She seems also to have developed a great liking for one of Mr Linley's sons, a midshipman. Parents are often very indiscreet. The midshipman was no longer a child, yet, when he fell ill, Emma was told off to nurse him. In spite of every care, the young

* Mrs Gamlin, ch. i, p. 4. On December 26, 1792, writing to Mrs Burt from Caserta, Lady Hamilton says: "I am writing to Mrs Thomas who lives on her estate. . . ."

† Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.* ch. i, p. 4.

man died and such was her grief that she left the house of his parents and entered the service of a Dr Budd. Her next venture brought her into a fruiterer's shop. However, life behind the counter did not satisfy her aspirations, and, when a Mrs Kelly, who had noticed the girl's good looks, offered to take her as a lady's-maid, Emma accepted with enthusiasm. Lady's-maid! This was a real promotion. At last her foot was in the stirrup. With a little good luck and clever management, what might not be in store for her!

At Mrs Kelly's Emma found novels, which she read eagerly and for which she soon developed a passion. Leisure for indulging this passion she secured by neglecting her duties. Her reading opened to her imagination the most dazzling prospects, and convinced her that life must be one long romance. Her head was still more effectually turned by frequent visits to the London theatres. Life as represented on the stage appeared to her far more brilliant and intense than in the pages of the books she read. She became passionately fond of all sorts of theatrical performances, and frequented them as often as possible.

When, after an evening spent at the play, she returned to her own little room, this budding passion for dramatic art would take possession of her, and she would rehearse to herself the attitudes of the actresses, endeavouring to reproduce their ways and the intonation of their voices. As she flitted about the house, she liked to look at herself in the mirrors of her mistress's apartment, pausing to practise the attitudes she already took such delight in. She also played at being the heroines of her novels, throwing herself into the attitudes she considered suitable to their tragic predicament. All the while, as she studied herself, she became more and more enamoured of the charming image that faced her in the mirror. These dramatic exercises, this acting and posing, developed in her a real talent that came to its full expression later in the famous attitudes, tableaux, dances, and all the per-

formances that she affected not only for the love of art, but because they gratified her vanity by setting off the grace and beauty of her form.

In the meantime, these practices merely served to mark the limitations of her wardrobe and her lack of interest in her duties. When at length Mrs Kelly dismissed her for giving herself airs, she wandered from one situation to another, and at last went as servant to a tavern, where her good looks and forward manner were alike calculated to attract customers. This inn seems to have been a haunt of artists, actors, musicians, and a regular centre of Bohemianism. These were not the guests to overlook for long the pretty servant girl; nor was she one to let herself be overlooked. By her insinuating manner she succeeded in ingratiating herself with an actress, Miss Arabel, who frequented the tavern. She was the mistress of Romney, the great artist, whose name was soon to be associated with Emma's. It was not, however, through her connection with Miss Arabel that she became acquainted with him.

If the *Memoirs* are to be believed, Emma succeeded in preserving her virtue even in this tainted atmosphere, but it was doubtless merely relative, and only awaited opportunities better than the patrons of the inn could afford. They had not the means to fulfil the young Welsh girl's golden dreams of love. She aimed higher.

Her first lapse from virtue was a typical grisette's adventure. According to the *Memoirs*, it was a generous impulse that brought it about, if indeed the story be true and her generosity concealed no secret thought of self-interest. Somehow she heard that one of her relations had been " pressed " and was on board a vessel lying in the Thames. It occurred to her to go to a certain captain in the navy—the future Admiral John Willett Payne, and ask him to intercede for her young relative. The officer made the young servant talk, and was much amused at her chatter. Apparently she was struggling with the bashfulness natural to her age. In reality she

was simply exercising the coquette's subtle art of attraction. Novels and plays had taught her the power of feminine fascination, and forthwith she tried her talent on the young officer, the first gentleman whom she had been able to approach. Success crowned her efforts, but the unwilling recruit's release was obtained at the price of his advocate's virtue.

A new life began for her; she had found her path. Lacking all principles of duty or of dignity, with her head full of romantic nonsense, how was it likely that this poor girl could withstand the golden promises and tempting presents of an officer in the Royal Navy? At Payne's request she cast aside her apron and bade goodbye to the tavern and its guests. When her protector discovered that she was as ignorant as she was beautiful, he decided to have her educated. So Emma took lessons in writing, arithmetic, and music, and was soon able to play a little on the piano. By degrees Payne succeeded in making her drop her country manners and speech, and did his best to give her polish and refinement.

In the midst of all these serious occupations, the pupil gave birth to a little girl, on whom she bestowed her own name, though she displayed no great affection on that account. The child was entrusted to the care of Mrs Kidd, its great-grandmother, and with that ended alike the interest of father and mother.

As gradually the coarseness and vulgarity of the tavern maid gave place to a greater refinement of language and manners, the young woman was soon ripe for a wealthier lover. In the circle of the Captain's friends who marvelled at his pupil's progress was a young man called Featherstonehaugh. Her wonderful beauty had made a still greater impression on him than her intellectual development, and she made such rapid progress in his esteem that he asked the Captain to make her over to him. As Emma's extravagance had already brought Payne to the verge of ruin, he consented readily enough to his friend's request. So the fiery knight carried his

conquest off to Up Park, his magnificent country-seat in Sussex. Doubtless Emma had heard of this estate, for it is difficult otherwise to explain the rapidity with which the new love took root in her heart, unless it be that the young man's easy manners and elegant appearance were, by themselves, strong enough proof of ample means to influence her decision. At all events, they agreed wonderfully well together.

At Up Park began a life of entertainments and festivities, which transformed the estate into an earthly paradise. Five or six months slipped by in rapturous joy. But all things have an end, and pleasant days pass the most swiftly. Lovers soon weary when there are no distractions. As winter drew near, the young knight's ardour cooled, and the couple returned to town, where they were beset by financial difficulties. Featherstonehaugh appealed to his family for loans and advances, but they declined to come to his assistance. The young adventuress refused to curtail her expenditure, and sulked persistently. Featherstonehaugh seized the opportunity and broke with her.

Once more Eve was turned out of paradise. But having once tasted the golden pleasures of love in idleness, she vowed that henceforth nothing short of Eden should satisfy her. In the meantime, until this new paradise should be discovered, she had to look forward to enduring all the agony of poverty, for, as are most girls of her kind, she was invariably penniless.

As she loitered about the streets of London, ever on the look out for adventures, she became involved in many vulgar intrigues, and no good purpose can be served by seeking to investigate these too closely.* It was in

* Mrs Gamlin says that when Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh ruined himself, Emma went to stay with her grandmother at Hawarden. In the *Biographie Universelle*, Michaud says that she went on to the streets and fell at length to the lowest depths of degradation to which a woman can fall. Although this statement may be only too true, yet Emma has very likely been accused of more adventures than she really had. As these reports are not supported by any proofs, the historian cannot attach any importance to them.

one of these that she made the acquaintance of Dr Graham, a quack, who saw in her beauty a source of profit if not of fortune to himself. This adventurer, a Cagliostro or Mesmer on a smaller scale, was the inventor of a marvellous electrical couch which he called Apollo's Bed. It was said to possess wonderful properties and to exercise miraculous influence over all—young or old, married or single—who had recourse to its healing virtue.

This artful schemer had no difficulty in getting round Emma. When she told him of her passion for all kinds of acting and representations, it occurred to him that he might delight his clients by an entirely new performance, the principal attraction of which would be his new conquest in the part of the goddess Hygeia, lightly veiled in vaporous gauze and moving in a soft, discreet light.* Artists, authors, all the customers of her old haunt the tavern, and many others, came to worship at the shrine of the lovely goddess, and obtain from her the gift of health. The fair idol was enormously popular, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing her divine form immortalised by countless sketches and engravings. This satisfaction was followed by another which she appreciated still more keenly. After the manner of Jupiter when visiting Danae, many of her devotees came to her in a shower of gold, and she soon learnt the value of her youth and beauty. She learnt, too, to make use of her abasement to raise herself to an exalted position.

* Mrs Gamlin maintains that Emma did not represent the Goddess of Health in Graham's establishment. She quotes the words of a contemporary writer but does not give his name: "It has been asserted that it was the late Lady Hamilton who prefigured the Goddess of Health, but it was certainly not she." Mrs Gamlin puts forward no other proof, but adds that "Dr Graham advertised 'the rosy, the gigantic, the stupendous Goddess of Health,' and 'Vestina the Gigantic,' which produces the rational inference that the character was taken by a fully developed, massive woman, whereas Emma, at the time, was only a tall lithe girl of fourteen or fifteen years." Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit*, ch. i, pp. 10-11. As these events must have taken place in 1782, Emma was at least sixteen. As for Dr Graham, he was put in jail for "injurious publications."

Among the admirers who flocked to her shrine was the Hon. Charles Greville. As Payne's mistress she had captivated the master of Up Park; as the Goddess Hygeia she wound her toils about Charles Greville. They had met before at the gay entertainments given by Featherstonehaugh, and Emma had decided that this scion of the illustrious house of Warwick was not a protector to be despised.* Weary of the unsettled and precarious life she was leading, she had long been on the look-out for a rich prey, and thought that she had found it in the person of Greville.

In a letter written on January 10, 1782,—that is to say, when Emma was only sixteen or eighteen years old and was already accused of having ruined young Featherstonehaugh,—Greville gently reminded her how indiscreetly she had behaved during her first stay in London, adding that as she had returned to her evil courses he must despair of her happiness. "But," he concluded, "my dear Emily,† as you seem quite miserable now, I do not mean to give you uneasiness, but comfort, and tell you that I will forget your faults and bad conduct to Sir H. and myself and will not repent my good humor if I shall find that you have learnt by experience to value yourself, and endeavour to preserve your friends by good conduct and affection."‡

These lines open a wide field to conjecture. Emma had evidently deserved the reproaches of Sir Harry and his friend. Perhaps she had granted her favours to both and then deceived each in turn. To Emma nothing came amiss. Although not particularly gifted in mind or

* Countess de Boigne's account of their first meeting is quite different. It is well-known that Emma had no brothers, but Mme. de Boigne states that she was the sister of one of Greville's grooms. One day as she was sitting in the kitchen mending her stocking Greville saw her and was struck by the beauty of the girl and her bare foot. He had no difficulty in persuading her to leave the servant's hall and preside in his drawing-room. *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 113.

† Emma's real name was *Amy*.

‡ Morrison MSS. 114. January 10, 1782.

body, as a young man Greville had been a sort of Alcibiades on a small scale. Though lacking any strict principles, he was not without character, and to the pretensions of a fop he united the usual indulgence of youth. His views on women, love, and marriage were of the broadest, and unhampered by any tiresome scruples. He was a perfectly honourable man, and always displayed the grace and polish of good breeding. He possessed moderate means, and fostered an ambition to rise in favour at Court. In short, according to the rules of society, which only regards externals, he was "a gentleman," an ideal husband for any young lady who could be content with such apparent qualifications. To Emma Greville's accomplishments were sterling qualities, and before long they were the best of friends. Greville proposed to her one of those "honourable arrangements" which Lord Chesterfield, the great educator, thought fit to recommend to his son. Beautiful Emma was beyond doubt, and it pleased her protector to imagine that she was still innocent. With the same consummate art displayed by Mme. du Barry when she became the mistress of Louis XV, Emma did all in her power to foster this fond delusion and to persuade her lover that she had kept unsullied the flower of her purity. Of her past she told him only as much as suited her purpose, and, in spite of all he knew, Greville was no doubt content to believe what she chose to tell him. When, in spite of himself, he was forced to believe what he would not, he pardoned first, then shut his eyes and forgot. After all, fidelity is not demanded from a mistress. For Greville, happy in the possession of such a treasure, days and years rolled by swiftly.

It was Greville who introduced Emma to Romney, the artist whose eccentricities were no less renowned than the strength of his drawing and the richness of his colouring. Like everybody else, Romney was struck by her beauty, the delicacy of her features, the innocence and sweet melancholy that shone in her eyes. He begged her to grant him some sittings, and eventually reproduced

her in every possible attitude and character—as a Bacchante, as Cleopatra, Venus, Phryne. So often did he reproduce the arch beauty and child-like features of her exquisite face that he became possessed by his model, and all his feminine portraits bear the mark of Emma's inspiration. Her beauty suggested all the mischievous girls that look out from his pictures with wide-awake eyes, full of wonder and artless candour, bright as a spring morning, gay as the song of the soaring lark.*

Greville often accompanied his mistress to the artist's studio. At other times she was chaperoned by her mother, whom Greville had raised to the dignity of housekeeper. Mrs Gamlin says that the good woman, who was called Mrs Cadogan, "gave all her attention to the kitchen."

Perhaps she did not give the same attention to her daughter in Romney's studio. It is not surprising that, after studying her as Venus and Phryne, the artist should have fallen in love with his model; but it is impossible to know whether Romney's attachment for her was purely platonic. The presence of Mrs Cadogan —that far from savage Cerberus, whose dignity required but the smallest sop—sufficed, perhaps, to keep his passion in ethereal regions. The artist may well have had some opportunity for making certain advances calculated to alarm the feelings of so good and bashful a girl as Emma. At least it is hardly credible that she, who gave herself so freely, would have withstood the advances of an artist so well known, who loved her and who could generously satisfy her passion for luxury and extravagance.

Like many women of her kind, Emma affected great interest in art. She loved to dress up and pose before

* In 1804, when Hayley was writing Romney's biography, he wrote to Lady Hamilton: "You were not only his model, but his inspirer; and he truly and gratefully said that he owed a great part of his felicity as a painter to the angelic kindness and intelligence with which you used to animate his diffident and tremulous spirits to the grandest efforts of art." Pettigrew, *Memoirs of Lord Nelson*, vol. ii, p. 596.

a mirror, and if she went gladly to Romney's studio, it was, perhaps, partly for the artist that she went, but mostly for the pleasure of seeing her triumphant beauty reproduced in a thousand attitudes by the hand of a renowned painter. In that she found satisfaction for all her vanity. In England women are but little inclined to busy themselves with fancy needlework and other futile pastimes; Emma not only belonged to a class that takes no interest in such occupations, but was, moreover, too idle to take them up. She preferred a less ordinary accomplishment, and set about learning to draw, for which she showed a certain talent. She had, however, a much greater talent for music, an art to which she was passionately devoted. "One evening, by way of a treat, Greville took her to a fashionable resort of the past, Ranelagh Gardens; where her feelings so overcame her on hearing the singing of the principal lady, and the applause that followed it, that she was carried away by her excitement, and so far forgot herself as to burst forth into one of her most brilliant scenas, trilling and shaking in emulation of the rival vocalist. At first her interruption caused annoyance and astonishment to the visitors, who showed umistakable signs of disapprobation at so unusual a proceeding; but, as they listened, entranced by her vocalisation, they broke into a volley of applause."* Mrs Gamlin relates this incident, and adds that a stormy scene took place afterwards between Greville and his mistress, and that it was the only occasion on which he was obliged to show some severity.

In 1783 a new character appeared on the scene, one who, though overshadowed by her, was to play an important part in Emma's life, and whose memory is intimately associated alike with hers and Greville's. Sir William Hamilton, British Ambassador at the Court of Naples, was the uncle of the Hon. Charles Greville. He was the son of Lord Archibald Hamilton, some time Governor of Greenwich Hospital, and subsequently Governor of Jamaica. His mother was Lady Jane, daughter of the

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, ch. i, p. 14.

sixth Earl of Abercorn. As she was governess to the children of Frederick, Prince of Wales, her son was "named the foster-brother of George the Third from his constant companionship with the royal children."* Sir William was an antiquarian of merit, and had gathered together a collection of Greek and Etruscan vases which was acquired by the State in 1792, at the price of £8400. On this occasion, Hamilton was made Knight of the Bath.

He was a fine-looking man with a pleasant countenance full of intelligence, and bearing the umistakeable mark of his aristocratic descent. He was then over fifty, but appeared much younger than his age. A sceptic on most subjects, he had a great reverence for women and friendship. For some years he had been a widower, and was disposed to make the most of his freedom within the bounds prescribed by the code of good-breeding and the reserve that was part of his nature, and which he thought in keeping with his dignity as a diplomatist. In a word, he was a mild and genial epicurean, moderate in his follies and his philosophy, and a fluent and polished conversationalist. Beneath the courtly manners of a citizen of the world he concealed a very solid store of learning. He had, however, little or no strength of character.

It was at his nephew's house that he made Emma's acquaintance. In those days, in spite of Queen Charlotte's influence, morals were far from strict in England, and it was not thought in any way extraordinary for a man belonging to good society to sup with his nephew and the latter's mistress. The first advances were probably made by Emma. She displayed towards him more than the natural amiability to be expected by the uncle of her lover, and exerted all her wonderful powers of fascination, and all the wiles of the courtesan. To her advances Hamilton responded with the good-humoured indulgence of the middle-aged man who believes himself proof against the attacks of feminine frivolity. Whilst treating her with courtesy and gallantry,

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, ch. ii, p. 25.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON
From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the National Portrait Gallery

he yet displayed a sufficient ardour and youthful enthusiasm to temper any evident marks of the ripeness of his years. In Emma's company he did not pride himself on using the language of a diplomatist; still less did he play the moralist, but simply placed her on a footing of good fellowship.

At first Emma behaved with the reserve she was bound to show towards the uncle of her lover, but she soon became more familiar, as may be gathered from her letters to Greville. On June 27 she wrote: "I am much oblidged to you for all the kind things you say to me, and tell Sir William I am much oblidged to him for saying I looked well. I hope he will allways think so; for I am proud of (his) good word, and I hope I shall never forfeit it." On July 3 she wrote: "Say everything that is kind and will render me dear to him." By August 10 she is on terms of still closer intimacy, for she writes: "My kind love to Sr William; and tell him if he will come soon, I will give him a thousand kisses. For I do love him a little." Perhaps she had already fixed her calculating eyes upon the diplomatist's fortune, that she was so prodigal to him of her kisses.

All this took place in 1784. An affection of the skin made it necessary for Emma to take sea baths, and she went to Parkgate, which was about one mile from the village where she was born. Here, — doubtless in an hour of idleness or ennui — she suddenly remembered that she was the mother of a little girl, and she wrote to Greville on June 15: "Tell me what to do with the child?" It would be a mistake to think these words cold and heartless, for in this same letter Emma assured Greville of her grateful feelings: "For I have gratitude, and will show it you all I can, so don't think of my faults, Greville."* This letter was signed Emma Hart.†

* Morrison MSS., 125, 126, 128-9.

† It was about this time that, for some unknown reason, Emma adopted the name of Hart. Probably she did not wish to be recognised by people who had known her as Amy Lyon.

Mrs Gamlin thinks it sublime that such a young woman should express the sentiment contained in the next letter, written on June 22. However, there is no reason for going into ecstasies or for over-rating the value of such a simple action and the feelings that prompted the accomplishment of the most elementary of duties. She wrote to Greville that she felt truly a mother—a feeling that she had never known a week before—and she adds: "I will do all in my power to prevent her falling into the error her poor, once miserable mother fell into."* Words to move Greville, but whose tenderness and import must not be exaggerated, for they are on the lips of every abandoned girl who has a child to care for.

Her cure over, Emma returned to London and, by Greville's desire, brought the little girl with her. She was entrusted to the care of the Blackburns, who were to educate her and look after her in return for a sum of £65 a year.

In London, Emma and Greville led a comfortable if not luxurious existence, but the expenditure was too heavy for Greville's purse. Emma had drained Payne's coffers, she had devoured half of Featherstonehaugh's substance, and now she was in a fair way to ruin Greville. She certainly kept the accounts of the household,† though with what degree of accuracy we cannot

* Morrison MSS. 126.

† A page from Emma's account book for the month of October 1784, reads

	s	d
Gloves	1	6
Letters		4
Coach	1	0
Poor man		½
Tea	12	0
Sugar	9	9
Porter		2
Eggs		4
Magazines	1	0

Morrison MSS., Appendix A., p. 375.

tell, but the revenue was not at all equal to the expenditure.

Like all girls of her sort, Emma was not inclined to deny herself her pleasures, and in Mme. de Boigne's phrase, her lover soon saw his fortune ablaze. The poor fellow was so impoverished that a few year's later, when he had separated from Emma, he was unable, from lack of money to pay for it, to accept the delivery of a portrait of his mistress, which he had ordered from Romney. A Mr Curwen had seen the painting in the artist's studio, and had expressed a desire to purchase it. As Romney had painted the picture to Greville's order, he wrote to inform him of the offer and to express his readiness to keep the picture for him and accommodate him with easy terms. On February 25, 1788, Greville send him the following reply: "The separation from the original of 'The Spinstress' has not been indifferent to me, and I am but just reconciled to it, from knowing that the beneficial consequences of the arrangement will be obtained, and that the aberration from the plan will be for her benefit. I therefore can have no reason to value 'The Spinstress' less than I have done; on the contrary, the just estimation of its merits is ascertained by the offer from a person who does not know the original. Yet I find myself daily so much poorer that I do not foresee when I can pay for it; and I am already too much obliged to you to avail myself in any degree of your kindness to me. Perhaps Mr Christian might accept my resignation of it, and pay for it, and give me the option of repurchasing if the improbable event of my increase of means shall enable me to recover what I now lose with regret, but I can make no conditions, and I leave the full and entire disposal of it to you."*

This is a strange letter, for, if Greville's words are to be trusted, he really regretted the loss of his mistress. His poverty had forced him to part with her, but he loved her so well that he wanted to provide for her

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, ch. ii, p. 17.

future, and this suggested to him a singular plan which he inwardly condemned, but which he clung to for want of a better one. He thought that by handing Emma over to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, who was a wealthy man, he would have the consolation of giving his mistress a final proof of his affection. Emma was to be kept in ignorance of this plan, which would be worked out carefully, so as not to wound any susceptibilities she might happen to possess. The regard she had for Sir William and the familiar footing on which she stood with him would facilitate the execution of this plan.

It must be remembered that it was mere caprice that had led Greville into his connection with Emma, who had accepted him partly on account of his good looks, but mainly because of his name and fortune. These interested motives had given way to nobler sentiments, and, on both sides, love had sprung up, just as sometimes happens when wise parents arrange a suitable marriage for their children. Greville's letter makes it clear that the lovers had fallen out, probably on account of Emma's extravagance. They had even separated, but their feelings towards each other never varied. In his perplexity Greville was planning how he might best prepare Emma for the final separation and break the ties that were fast becoming for him a hindrance to more serious plans for the future, and for her a chain of whose weight she would be painfully conscious as soon as the gilt should have worn off.

They had, then, to part, but Greville found himself driven by a series of circumstances, over which he had no control, into a position from which there was no possible means of egress open to him save by a method to which it would be as difficult to reconcile the world as Emma. Remembering his uncle's admiration for Emma's beauty and vivacity, he conceived the idea of passing his mistress on to Hamilton, and thus leaving himself free to replenish his exhausted estate and rebuild his fallen fortunes by marriage with some wealthy heiress.

It was indeed a moral "aberration," but he was the first to admit it, and he must not be too harshly judged.

His distress was as genuine as his love had been. If the means he employed leave something to be desired, it must be acknowledged that the young man was displaying an altruism rarely to be found in his class. He was endeavouring by this unusual arrangement to provide for the future of her whom he was deserting.

When Emma understood that the separation was a final one, her grief was no less sincere than Greville's, and this sincerity must be counted to her for credit. She mourned awhile the loss of her love, but in time her vexation gave place to calculation, and to schemes for her future that closely resembled Greville's. Thus, with the memory of the past still deeply engraved on their hearts, they both set about rebuilding their fortunes and shaping for themselves a prosperous future. It was all very natural—they had loved, they still loved each other, but they had to separate, *invitus invitam*. They deserve our commendation, for so many girls heedlessly leave their lovers, and so many young men abandon their mistresses without a thought for their future, and the world thinks none the worse of them for it—rather the better.

Greville knew that his plan was an unworthy one and he had not hesitated to admit it, but the sacrifice that he was making blinded him to the real baseness of the project. Moreover, it was all for his mistress's good! It is curious that men often feel themselves bound to show more consideration to women who are unworthy than to honourable women.

The execution of his plan gave rise to a series of negotiations that reflect little credit on him. In spite of the warmth of the sentiments with which he covers the decay of his principles Greville cuts a sorry figure. When he first broached the subject to Sir William, who had returned to Naples, his tone was one of self-congratulation. He wrote:

"I am sure she is attached to me, or she would not have refused the offers, which I know have been great, and such is her spirit that, on the least slight or expression of my being tired or burdened by her, I am sure she would not only give up the connexion but would not even accept a farthing for future assistance. This is another part of my situation. If I was independent I should think so little of any other connexion that I never would marry. I have not an idea of it at present, but if any proper opportunity offerd I should be much harassed, not know how to manage, or how to fix Emma to her satisfaction . . . Give me your opinion honestly how you would act in my situation; if I followed only my own inclination, advice would be unnecessary."*

Thus appealed to, Hamilton wasted no time but cut the tangled knot at a blow. If his nephew would send the fair Emma to Naples he would be glad to welcome her there.

This was just what Greville wanted, but, for form's sake, he thought it well to raise some objections to conceal his pleasure at this solution of his difficulties.

In his next letter he affected great concern for his mistress and for the rules of decorum: "To leave Emma unprovided, I could not, and take her to Naples might do for a time, and to what would it lead! To go there without her would be debarring her from the last chance of happiness—your protection. I therefore determined to write to you and to trust, as I would have done on every occasion to your good sense and to your heart, and I have not been disappointed . . .

"If you can find only one or two acquaintances, and let her learn music or drawing, or anything to keep in order, she will be as happy as if you gave her every change of disipation . . . If you could form a plan by which you could have a trial, and could invite her and tell her that I ought not to leave England, and that I cannot afford to go on, and state it as a kindness

* Morrison MSS. 134.

to me if she would accept your invitation, she would go with pleasure . . . I must add that I could not manage it so well later; after a month's absence and absent from me, she would consider the whole more calmly."*

As these negotiations proceeded another idea took root in Greville's mind.

His first thought in sending Emma to his uncle had been altogether for her and her future, but he now saw other consequences that might result from the transfer. If she could amuse him, distract him, keep him occupied and interested, become his mistress and tend his last years with loving care, he would never dream of marrying again, and Greville's inheritance would be assured to him.

The idea is manifested in his letter of March 10, 1785, which throws a curious light on the psychology of this faithful but calculating lover: "I know you love variety and are a general flirt . . . I say I neither know whether your heart or your feet are lightest, but that I believe them both sound, and altho' Harry Harpur says he was witness of the deluge of blood of boars that flowed around you, I know that your heart is neither calous to friendship nor to beauty . . . It must be a very interested friend indeed who does not sincerely wish everything that can give happiness to a friend. I sincerely wish that happiness to you."†

In those days it took a long time for a letter to travel from London to Naples. Without waiting for an answer to his last hypocritical epistle, Greville wrote once more to his uncle on November 11, 1785: "Yet have I no alternative but to marry or remain a pauper. I shall persist in my resolution not to lose an opportunity if I can find it, and do not think that my idea of sending her to Naples on such an event arises from my consulting my own convenience only. I can assure you she would not have a scarcity of offers, she has refused great ones."‡

* Morrison MSS. 138. † Morrison MSS. 136.
‡ Morrison MSS.

At length, the longed-for reply came. Hamilton proposed that Emma should come to Naples and do the honours of his house. To the Ambassador this arrangement seemed quite honourable, but again Greville expostulated. All the laws of decorum made it impossible for a young girl to live alone with him. Evil reports must be avoided. The plan was an impossible one. As Greville was constantly pursued by the thought of his inheritance, he added that he had met Hamilton's brother who was to leave his fortune to the Ambassador: "I write without affectation or disguise. If you find me either reserved or artful you may despise me; but in opening my heart and thoughts, do not impute conceal'd designs. I wish you every happiness in this world and long life to enjoy it. I protest, I do not think the odds in our lives are proportioned to the difference of our years."*

These sentiments may well have been genuine, but Greville's insistent reiteration of his sincere affection for his uncle is itself suspicious.

The whole transaction was carried on in such a deplorable way and with such cynical deliberation as cannot but lower even the lowest estimate that might otherwise be formed of Greville's good feeling and delicacy.

The ambiguity of the nephew's sentiments and the feelings that the older man began to evince towards Emma give a very clear idea of the low moral level of the circle in which she was situated. Indeed, if comparison must be made in this respect, it will be found that she comes the most creditably out of the ordeal.

For the reasons that have been stated Greville was most anxious about the success of his scheme, in the execution of which Hamilton now assisted him to the very best of his ability, for he longed to have Emma to enliven the solitude of Naples by her sprightly charms, her innocent ways, and her fascinating perversity. Emma, who knew nothing of her lover's real intentions, started

* Morrison MSS. 137.

happily on her journey, for Greville had promised to join her in six months. She set out under the escort of her mother, Mrs Cadogan, who lent herself most willingly to this little *combinazione*, of Gavin Hamilton, the artist, and his wife and daughter.

CHAPTER II

Sir William Hamilton receives Emma at Naples—She stays at the Embassy—Description of Emma—Hamilton falls in love with her —Emma's letters to Greville—The matrimonial 'campaign— Emma as artist—Her relations with Hamilton—Mistress of the house—Her beauty creates a sensation—Voyage to England— Arrival in London—Her marriage with Sir William Hamilton— Letters from Horace Walpole and Sir Thomas Lawrence—Return to Naples.

THE travellers reached their destination in safety, and on April 26 — her birthday — Emma Hart crossed the threshold of the Palazzo Sessa, the residence of the British Ambassador in Naples. Sir William spared no pains in preparing a hearty welcome for his nephew's mistress and her mother, and the finest suite of rooms was placed at their disposal. Besides the fact that the arrival of his guests would enliven the monotony of a mansion far too large for a solitary bachelor, Hamilton could not but view with pleasure the prospect of seeing every day at his table or in his salon the fresh young face that had already fascinated him in London. It was certainly a complete change from the study of antiquities which hitherto had occupied his leisure hours.

At the time of her arrival in Naples Emma was a figure of marvellous beauty, slender and lissome, the incarnation of grace, charm—and perversity, whilst the angelic expression of her face gave no clue to the sordid soul within. Closer examination betrayed that she was not absolutely faultless; her frame was too massive, her shoulders too heavy, and the lines of her bust and throat

lacked softness and roundness. Her hands and above all her feet were too large . Her neck was too long, and the line from the forehead to the chin too short, but she had the matchless brilliance of complexion that is a common feature of English beauty. Her eyes were soft and tender, yet sparkling and full of animation, her mouth was bewitchingly small, and the whole was set in a generous frame of dark auburn hair.* Her nose was straight or very slightly tilted. Later on, it took a more refined curve and became aquiline.† Her most remarkable feature, however, was the expression of absolute candour, of virginal purity and chastity that so belied her character,‡ and the sweet, smiling melancholy that shone in her angelic countenance. Some indefinable charm, delicate as the bloom on a peach, born of ingenuousness or of artifice, enhanced her power of seduction far more than any ornament of dress or toilet, for, according to Mme. Le Brun, "she had no style and dressed very badly."§ Nevertheless, she too was on her knees before her.

If Sir William did not at once adopt this humble attitude, it was not from lack of inclination. In her first letter to Greville after her arrival in Naples, Emma spoke

* Jeaffreson says that her mouth was her most remarkable feature. *Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson*, by Jeaffreson, London 1888.

† This may be seen in a sketch made by Lawrence, probably in 1791. In later years, Emma grew extremely stout, her features lost their delicate outline, and her lowly origin betrayed itself in the heavy limbs and the powerful frame.

‡ Mrs Gamlin says that people compared her to the Madonnas of the great Masters. Referring to Emma Hart, Horace Walpole quotes these lines written by an anonymous admirer ;

"All that arose to mental view
When Raphael his best angels drew."

§ In such matters, women are the best judges. Countess de Boigne says ; "But for her artistic instinct, nothing could be more vulgar and common than Lady Hamilton. As soon as she laid aside the classical robe and donned ordinary clothes, she lost all distinction." *Mémoires* vol. i, p. 115.

of the Ambassador's attention to her. No scrupulous considerations kept her from accepting his advances, but her faithfulness to Greville's love, which she could not believe to be lost to her for ever. She wrote constantly to him, and often, with a touch of irony, consulted the old lover on the line of conduct she was to follow towards the new one. In a letter written on April 30, 1786, she says to him: ". . . You have a true friend* in Sir William, and he will be happy to see you, and do all he can to make you happy; and for me, I will be everything you can wish for . . . I respect Sir William, I have a great regard for him, as the uncle and friend of you, and he loves me, Greville. But he can never be anything nearer to me than your uncle and my sincere friend. He never can be my lover . . . I am sorry to say it he loves me now, as much as ever he could Lady Bolingbroke—endead, I am sorry, for I cannot make him happy . . . But my comfort is, I rely on your promise, and September or October I shall see you. But I am quite unhappy at not hearing from you—no letter for me yet, Greville. But I must wait with patience . . ."

Sir William had evidently put his carriage at her disposal, for she goes on to say: "If I was going abbout in is carriadge the would say, I was either his wife or mistress. Therefore as I am not nor ever can be either, we have made a very good establishment. I have a very good apartments of 4 rooms, very pleasant—looking to the sea. . . . I know you will be pleased to hear that and he has given me a beautiful gown, cost 25 guineas (India painting on wite sattin) and several little things of Lady Hamilton's . . .† Pray my dear Greville, do write me word if you want any money. I am affraid I distressed you. But I am sure Sir William will send you some and I told him he

* As Emma was ignorant of the agreement existing between the two men, Hamilton's endeavours to draw her away from Greville must have shaken her faith in the genuineness of his friendship.

† Sir William must have been sadly wanting in delicacy, or he would not have given Emma objects that had belonged to his wife.

must keep you a little now, and send you some for your journey hear, and he kissed me, and the tears came into 'is eyes, and he told me I might command anything for he loved us boath dearly."*

The letter shows real feeling and generosity and a degree of delicacy as unexpected in Emma as it is creditable to her. Whether this sudden display of generosity was sincere or not is quite another question, but in all probability it was, as it was not her own money that she offered to Greville. It is only just to say that although Emma had a selfish and calculating disposition, throughout her life she was most liberal and open-handed. But her pretty lips had become so accustomed to deceit that her words may well be unconvincing even to herself.

Greville's lips had not caught their beauty from those that had been so often pressed to his, but they had caught their fluency and their facility in deceit. Now he had no need to lie; he said nothing. To her letters he made no reply, but with amazing self-conceit he wrote to his uncle that Emma's love for him was admirable and would not be in the least embarrassing, as she was so easily contented. He at least did not doubt Emma's whole-hearted devotion to him, and perhaps he was right. As she heard nothing from him Emma wrote to him on July 22, 1786, a letter full of tender entreaty to which his neglect gives a tinge of sadness: "My ever dearest Greville, I am now onely writing, to beg of you for God's sake to send me one letter, if it is onely a farewell. Sure I have deserved this, for the sake of the love you once had for me. Think, Greville, of our former connexion and don't despise me. I have not used you ill in any one thing. I have been from you going of six months, and you have wrote one letter to me, enstead of which I have sent fourteen to you. So pray, let me beg of you, my much loved Greville, only one line from your dear, dear hands. You don't know how thankful I shall be for it. For, if you

* Morrison MSS. 150

knew the misery I feel, oh! your heart would not be intirely shut up against me; for I love you with the truest affection. Don't let anybody sett you against me. Some of your friends—your foes perhaps; I don't know what to stile them—have long wisht me ill. But, Greville, you never will meet with anybody, that has a truer affection for you than I have, and I onely wish it was in my power to shew you what I could do for you. As soon as I know your determination, I shall take my own measures. If I don't hear from you, and that you are coming according to promise, I shall be in England at Cristmass at farthest. Don't be unhappy at that. I will see you once more for the last time. I find life is unsuportable without you. Oh! my heart is intirely broke. Then for God's sake, my ever dear Greville, do write to me some comfort. I don't know what to do. I am now in that state, I am incapable of anything. I have a language-master, a singing-master, musick, etc., but what is it for? If it was to amuse you, I should be happy—But Greville, what will it avail me? I am poor, helpless, and forlorn."*

This seems to have been a last appeal, a supreme effort to win Greville back. Perhaps Emma was troubled by Hamilton's attitude and the prospect it opened to her for the future, or she was weary of the eternal sunshine of Italy and pined for London's moist and uncertain climate.

Meanwhile the days dragged on wearily and the uncertainty of her position became unbearable. Her early life had not destroyed the natural qualities of her disposition as much as might have been expected. Her sincerity and faithfulness compare favourably with those of her lover. Experience had taught her the art of pleasing and flattering men, but sincere affection only could have inspired the sweet messages she sent to Greville. There was no reason for her to affect a sentiment she did not feel, for Hamilton and his wealth were already in her

* Morrison MSS. 152.

power, and her declaration to Greville would have been of the utmost imprudence had it not been a last passionate farewell to lover and love, before she sold herself to her elderly protector.

At last, touched by her pleadings or from some feeling of compunction, Greville answered her appeals. The purport of his letter can only be conjectured from Emma's indignant reply. Seeing that his heart was closed to her, she now appealed to his interests, and retorted by a threat that she thought might startle him: "Pray write, for nothing will make me so angry, and it is not to your *intrest* to disoblidge me, for you don't know the power I have hear . . . If you affront me, I will make him marry me."*

In the face of Greville's silence and Hamilton's emboldened advances it would be too much to expect that Emma should shut herself up in cold and dignified reserve. It is only courteous to believe in the virtuous intentions of women, but this "power" that Emma boasts of leaves no room for doubt.

Greville's silence augured nothing good. Greville ruined could serve her no longer. Money she must have, and this meant another protector. Sir William was rich; she would take him, and later on would make him her husband. His gold should console her for the loss of Greville, youth and love. Hitherto she had lived only for the present, but Greville's defection opened her eyes and made her think of the future. Marriage alone could assure that future and Hamilton seemed willing to allow her all her pleasures, if she would but allow him his. Experience had taught her the truth of Vauvenargue's saying: "Les passions des hommes sont autant de chemins ouverts pour aller à eux." But she knew better than to make advances to him; it was for him to come to her. She would make him do all her will, submit to every whim and desire, and consent even to marriage. She would lead him by careful stages through all the byways

* Morrison MSS. 153, August 1, 1786.

of the land of love, now encouraging him, now keeping him at a distance. To make more sure of her prey she would let the adventure come almost to a crisis. Thus would she make him marry her. She had had enough of this Bohemian existence, she wanted a settled and regular position, and all means to that end were acceptable to her.

Either to fan Sir William's ardour, or from an irresistible desire to see Greville once more, Emma now proposed to return to England. As yet she had not thought fit to yield to Hamilton's desires, for, in a letter to his nephew, the Ambassador declared that he would have wished to make some impression on her affections, but, as she obstinately rejected all his advances, arrangements were being made for her to carry out her wish and return to England.

Greville did not want to see his former mistress return to London. As far as he was concerned the idyll had ended when Emma started for Naples. Nevertheless, he wished to remain on good terms with her who was, or was soon to become, his uncle's mistress. He felt that the separation must be a definite one and that Emma must be brought to understand that the past was to be forgotten and that in the future there could be no question of love between them. Later, of course, he might be very pleased to meet her as a friend. He was too well-bred not to treat his former mistress with all the consideration due to a woman, and on this occasion, he acted with something like kindness. He wrote to her that he would always be glad to meet her *as a friend*, but that she must not look for any other sentiments from him. He was, as always, generous to her of advice. That which he gave his uncle on this occasion was particularly edifying: "Go on circumventing Emma," said the cynical writer, "she will surrender at last. It is not in the power of woman to withstand a prolonged siege."

When Emma understood that Greville's decision was irrevocable, she resigned herself to staying in Naples. If

Greville had ceased to love her, there was nothing to take her to London.

Neither nephew nor uncle saw that not Emma but they were the dupes. It never entered their heads that, so far from her being besieged, it was she who was carrying on the siege, who was already mistress of the position, and who could make it capitulate at her discretion whenever it might suit her.

All Hamilton's perspicacity did not penetrate her scheme. In spite of what he knew of Emma's past, he attributed her shyness and hesitation to virtue and sensibility. The touch of her hand, the intoxicating breath of her presence, her glance of passion or of soft detachment were charms against which his years should have made him proof. Before them, however, Hamilton's self-control vanished like smoke. With a youth's impetuous ardour he took for love the passions that the young schemer aroused within him. By all sorts of fallacious arguments he persuaded himself that the girl's physical beauty was but a pale reflection of the exquisite beauty of the soul within. He could no longer listen to the voice of reason, and at the siren's call, he threw to the winds all the wisdom and experience of half a century. In a moment of rapture, with the spell of Emma's spirit heavy on him, he was caught and held fast in her toils. Gone for ever was his liberty. Henceforth he became but an obedient puppet in her hands.

According to the hour she baited him with bold attacks or chaste reserve, and by such wiles established herself for ever in Hamilton's heart. How firmly she held him in her power may be gathered from a letter to Greville in which she gave no sign of grief or disappointment, but assured him that she still thought of him tenderly and that he would never meet any woman who would love him as sincerely as she did. Then she added: "Sir William is never a moment from me. He goes no where without me. He as no dinners but what I can be of the party. . . I now live upstairs in the same

apartments where he lives, and my old apartments is made the musick-rooms where I have my lessons in the morning."*

They were now on terms of absolute intimacy. After having fooled and trifled with her so long the Ambassador had fallen into the nets where so many, including his nephew, had been caught before him. He was now involved in a common liaison, and his age made him consider the tie in a serious light. For her part Emma left nothing undone to establish more and more firmly her hold on her lover. To please him, she affected great interest in art, at a time when women with artistic tastes were rare. This unusual distinction added to the charm of her exquisite beauty a touch of superiority which her conversation could not give.

Mme. Le Brun had just arrived in Naples. Emma was eager to become acquainted with the celebrated artist, so that she might converse with her on painting, and air her connection with Romney. With this end in view she persuaded Sir William to commission Mme. Le Brun to paint her portrait. Count Scawronski, the Russian Ambassador, had just ordered his wife's picture, so the British Ambassador must straightway do as much for his mistress. True, he already possessed a complete gallery of Emma in every attitude and pose, but he could refuse her nothing, and so one morning found them at the Hôtel du Maroc on the Chiaja quay, where the great artist had taken up her abode. In her Memoirs, Mme. Le Brun thus relates this visit: "Sir William Hamilton begged me as a favour, that the first portrait I should paint in Naples, might be that of a splendid-looking woman whom he introduced to me. It was Mrs Hart, his mistress, who was celebrated for her beauty."

The artists of the 17th century and also Nattier and Boucher had started the fashion of representing their models as mythological characters. Mme. Le Brun painted

* Morrison MSS. 168. This letter is undated. Mrs Gamlin thinks it was written in 1789.

BACCHANTE

From a painting by Vigée Le Brun in the Collection of Tankerville Chamberlayne, Esq.

Emma as a Bacchante lying by the sea, and holding a cup in her hand.*

Casting aside the wine-cup for the pen, the beautiful Bacchante wrote once more to Greville. She could not resist the pleasure of singing her own praises to the man who had first made her take music-lessons in London. With intense satisfaction, she told him of the success she had already reaped as an artiste. In the bottom of a courtesan's heart there slumbers generally some homely aspiration. All Emma's aspirations were artistic; it was only later that she called in her art to help her to play the great lady. Even then the thin coating of veneer often peeled off and betrayed the grisette of early days. So Emma wrote to Greville: "I must tell you that I have had great offers to be first whoman in the Italian Opera at Madrid, where I was to have six thousand pounds for three years . . . I certainly shall sing at the Pantheon and Hanover Square except something particular happens, for Galini says he will make a subscription concert for me, if I won't engage for the Opera. But I wish'd to consider of it, before I engage. Sir William says he will give me leave to sing at Hanover Square, on the condition Galini as proposed, which is 2 thousand pounds. Sir William as took my master into the house and pays him a great price on purpose that he shall not teach any other person . . . I have my French master, I have the Queen's dancing-master 3 times a week; I have 3 lessons in singing a day—morning at eight o'clock, before diner and the evening; and people makes enterest to come and hear me. My master goes to England with ous."†

To a woman indolent, as Emma was, by nature, the climate of Naples, with its atmosphere laden with the perfume of mint, fig-trees, orange-blossom and myrtle, was far from conducive to constant application. Yet Emma was hard at work, eager to become a famous artist.

* Emma was particularly fond of personating a Bacchante. Romney and Sir Joshua Reynolds also represented her in this character.

† Morrison MSS. 168.

The only explanation is that she wanted to dazzle Sir William still further by this display of her talents. She may also have wished to justify to the world her elevation to an exalted position and to acquire, by her own merits as an artist, a place in Neapolitan society from which she was debarred by reason of her notorious past and the lowliness of her birth. Her talent would raise her up and justify the honour bestowed on her, and doubtless she was encouraged on her way by Hamilton's praise of her progress and talents. So she worked away, never missing an opportunity for putting herself forward, fishing for compliments, singing her own praises and generally making the most of her merits. Thus one more string was added to her well-stocked bow, and her art became a powerful auxiliary to her wiles and coquetry. Hamilton had furnished her with one more weapon that was to be turned against him. However sure Emma may have felt of her hold on her veteran admirer, she knew full well that, at the eleventh hour, he might still slip between her fingers. If this should happen her art might be of great service to her. She knew men's weaknesses and vanity, and the attraction that an actress has for them. She would indeed be unworthy of her gifts if she could not quickly find a successor to Sir William.

Meanwhile, to the best of her ability, she played the "lady" and congratulated herself that she played it well. She was absolute mistress in the Ambassador's house and did the honours as though she were his legitimate wife. If the accounts with which she gratified Greville may be relied upon, she seems to have been a very successful hostess: "We gave yesterday a diplomatic dinner. So after dinner I gave them a Concert; so I sent the coach and my compliments to the Banti, who is first whoman at San Carlo's and desired her to come and sing at my concert. So she came, and there were near sixty people. So, after the first quartett I was to sing the first song. At first I was a little frightened before I begun; for she is a famous singer, and she placed herself close to me. But when I be-

gan all fear whent awhay, and I sang so well that she cried out; Just God what a voice! I would give a great deal for your voice. In short, I met with such aplause that it almost turned my head. Banti sang after me and I asure you everybody said I sung in a finer stile than her." If Emma was not an artist, she had all the artist's ingenuous vanity and credulity. Her mind was not wholly taken up with music. She had set herself another task and was working hard to accomplish it. "Poor Sir William was so enraptured with me. For he was afraid I should have been in a great fright, and it was of consequence that evening, for he wanted to shew me of to some Dutch officers, that was there, that is with a sixty gun ship and a frigate. The Comodore whose name is Melville was so inchanted with me, that though he was to depart the next day, he put it of and give me a diner on board, that realy surpasses all description . . . "*

How delighted she was with herself and the prospect of dining on board the Dutch vessel! How eager to appear before the admiring gaze of the officers in all the glory of her radiant beauty, set off by the lovely flush that the excitement of the meal would bring to her cheeks! What an opportunity to charm and please. She loved the sparkle of champagne, the excitement, the freedom from restraint. All combined to heighten her vivacity and to enhance her fascination and allurements. Emma had the actor's craving for applause. Greville was her audience and, even at the risk of wearying him by a long letter, she sent him a minute account of this wonderful fête, dwelling with delight on every detail, lingering on the pleasures she had enjoyed. "First Sir William me and mother . . . But, as we passed the frigate, she fired all her guns, that I wish you had seen it. We sett down thirty to dine—me at the head of the table, mistress of the feast, drest all in virgin white and my hair in ringlets reaching allmost to my heals."†

In her excitement Emma was quite carried away by

* Morrison MSS. 168. † *Idem.*

her imagination. It seemed to her that her hair, of which she was so proud, almost swept the ground; yet, in the numerous sketches of the "attitudes" made by artists who had certainly no wish to displease her, her hair reaches no further than her waist.* With characteristic thoughtlessness Emma forgot that Greville, of all people in the world, would know the length of her hair; but perhaps it had grown with her pretentions, and as she herself had grown into a *grande dame*.

Emma's style of beauty was distinctly English and in marked contrast to the usual type of Italian beauty. For this very reason, her appearance caused a sensation in Naples. In the streets, men, women, and children rendered homage to her after the demonstrative manner of their race. Even the clergy paid their ecstatic tribute of admiration and compared the lovely sinner to the Virgin Mary. One evening, in the midst of a few intimate friends, Sir William placed a shawl on his mistress's head. Crumpling it up to her fancy, Emma assumed a look of deep contrition and, enraptured with her beauty, raised her eyes slowly to heaven. Her expression was so pure, so holy, that an enthusiastic Abbé told her, with tears in his eyes and a quavering voice, that God had sent her on earth with some special mission. Her poses, her grace and charm of manner and of person, had much more to do with Emma's success than her conversation. She knew that men thought more of looks than words, and, scandal apart, she had no gift for conversation. According to Mme. Le Brun, she was not witty and her conversation was insipid.† She did not even master the silly,

* Mme. Le Brun writes: "She had an enormous quantity of beautiful brown hair that could cover her entirely." On the other hand, Mrs Trench says that her hair was cut short and dressed after the antique fashion.

N.B. Mme. Le Brun refers to Emma as she saw her in Naples (1789). Mrs Trench met Emma in 1799 or 1800, when it was the fashion to wear the hair à la Titus. (Translator.)

† "Her conversation was devoid of interest or even intelligence." Countess de Boigne, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 115.

meaningless gossip that conceals so many intellectual deficiences, and is current money in society. Her accomplishments were different. Her poses, her dancing, her attitudes, her tableaux, these were her attractions, and in these she had no rival.

The performance with which she so often entertained her friends, required an unlimited supply of shawls. She might constantly discover new attitudes, but new accessories were not always forthcoming. On one occasion Greville was asked to "coax" one of her old friends, Macpherson, to send her a shawl. Greville did as she wished for, in a subsequent letter Emma bade him thank his friend. Shawls, and the proper draping of them on her head and person, became Emma's chief interest in life.

In the summer, during the great heat, when the Court of Naples retired to Caserta, the British Ambassador went there also and hired a villa where he settled down with his mistress. Emma, who never tired of contemplating her beauty, had many hours of idleness to while away, so she ordered another portrait from Mme. Le Brun, who painted her this time as a Sibyl. The great French artist had introduced to her two illustrious *emigrées*, Princess Joseph de Monaco and her very original countrywoman, the Duchess de Fleury, the same Aimée de Coigny who, four years later, was to be the heroine of André Chenier's *Jeune Captive*. They were present at the last sitting, which Mme. Le Brun thus describes: "With a shawl, one end of which hung loosely forming a sort of drapery, I twisted a turban around Mme. Harte's head. (She was not yet married). This head-dress made her look so beautiful that the ladies were enraptured with her. As Hamilton had invited us all to dinner, Mme. Harte retired to dress. When she returned to the drawing-room, the gown she wore was so commonplace and so unbecoming that the two ladies had the greatest difficulty in recognising her."

There is nothing very astonishing in this. Let a pea-

sant-girl or a cook put on a lady's clothes. The result will not be a lady. The elegance of the costume will but accentuate the vulgarity and clumsiness of their appearance. In spite of all the praise bestowed on Emma by her admirers, her origin and the occupations of her early life must never be lost sight of.

At the beginning of 1791 Emma informed Greville that she would accompany Sir William on his trip to England. As she wished to baffle the gossipers and scandal-mongers she was to travel incognito. Greville also must have been somewhat baffled by the virtuous strain of her letter: "We come for a short time," she wrote, "and that time must be occupied in business, and to take our last leave. I don't wish to attract notice. I wish to be an example of good conduct, and to show the world that a pretty woman is not allways a fool. All my ambition is to make Sir Wiliam happy, and you will see he is so. Sir William will lett you know on what a footing we are here. On Monday last we gave a concert and ball at our hous. I had near four hundred persons—all the foreign ministers and their wives, all the first ladies of fashion, foregners and Neapolitans. Our house was full in every room. I had the Banti, the tenor Cosacelli, and 2 others to sing. Sir William dressd me in wite sattin. . . . I was without powder as it was the first great assembly we had given publickly."*

Emma was proud to tell Greville, who had known her in her days of poverty, that ladies of the highest rank were willing to associate with her, thereby, in her eyes, admitting her to the ranks of honourable women. But she knew full well that many refused to be her guests, and her vanity suffered terribly under the humiliation. She never forgot this slight, and during the Revolution in Naples many a great lady mounted the scaffold because she had not responded to the invitation of this adventuress.

She closed her letter with a burst of feeling that does

* Morrison MSS. 189.

her credit: "Think then, after what Sir William has done for me, if I should not be the horridest wretch in the world, not to be exemplary towards him. Endead, I will do all I can to render him happy. We shall be with you in the spring, and return heer in November and the next year you may pay ous a visit. We shall be glad to see you. I shall allways esteem you for your relationship to Sir William and having been the means of me knowing him. As to Sir William, I confess to you I doat on him. Nor I never can love any person but him. This confession will please you, I know."*

It will be noticed that Emma made no reference to the intended marriage, but the fact that she constantly referred to Sir William and herself as "*we*" was very significant. By asserting that she doted on Sir William she wished to make her former lover understand that her submission to his will had cost her little, that she had rooted up and cast to the winds all that remained of her old affection, and that thenceforth with a safe conscience he might come and see her simply as a "friend." Such thoughts may have suggested the words: "This confession will please you, I know." Or she may have written them with her usual thoughtlessness, but certainly there was no intention to wound or make an ill-timed reference to the past.

The contemplated journey took place, the Ambassador and his mistress reaching London in May 1791. They lived in the same house, which greatly shocked Emma's former patron, the more so as her last letter had led him to believe that she meant to be a model of propriety during her stay in London. "Greville," Mr Walter Sichel writes, "was unaware of the dead secret, but he implored Emma not to live in London as she had done in Naples; he pressed the propriety of separate establishments. Emma laughed him to scorn,"† and, a few days

* Morrison MSS. 189.

† *Emma, Lady Hamilton*, by Walter Sichel, p. 131.

later, persuaded Sir William to give an entertainment in *their* house.

The "dead" soon woke to life, the "secret" was soon public. Sir William's indulgence, his generous oblivion of her past, exceeded all the common bounds of convention. Unconsciously he had become Emma's creature, and now at her bidding consented to make her his wife. He did his best to justify to himself the course he was about to take, but, in the most secret recess of his soul, in that silent chamber where there is no dissimulating, he was conscious that his weakness was degrading. He tried to silence the voice of conscience by endless sophisms, and persuaded himself that he had discovered a thousand unperceived virtues in the woman who had given her favours to his nephew and to so many others.

The marriage was not announced until the very last moment. Sir William was not anxious to let all London know that there was a man who was fool enough to marry Dr Graham's "goddess," and that he, Sir William Hamilton, was that fool. In August 1791 Horace Walpole wrote to Miss Berry: "I shall fill my vacuum with some lines that General Conway has sent me, written by I know not whom, on Mrs Harte, Sir William Hamilton's pantomime mistress or wife, who acts all the antique statues in an Indian shawl. I have not seen her yet, so I am no judge, but people are mad about her wonderful expression, which I do not conceive; so few antique statues having any expression at all, nor being designed to have it."*

Sir William's marriage was not announced until the event had become imminent. He then had to face the surprise and indignation of his family. His niece, Mrs Dickenson, remonstrated, but in vain. There is nothing from which a man can be more easily dissuaded than from marriage with a respectable girl—there are always reasons to be urged against it, such as lack of fortune, of

* *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. xv, p. 41.

talents, or of pedigree,—but let him once make up his mind to regularise by marriage his connection with his mistress, and neither the objurgations of his family nor the lessons of experience nor the certainty that he is committing an act of folly that will mean his ruin, will avail aught with him to change his purpose. Fortune, talents and birth do not enter into the consideration in such a case. In that of Sir William Hamilton, the ground had been carefully prepared and his resolution was irrevocable. Before leaving Naples the Ambassador had spoken to Mme. Le Brun about the opposition that he would meet with on the part of his family: "She shall be my wife in spite of them all," he said. "After all, I marry her for myself!" In this, however, he was mistaken. He had but married her for Nelson, and was to become her dupe. Moreover he was wrong when he declared that his relatives had nothing to do with his marriage. Each member of a family is responsible for the honour of the house, and this consideration alone should have prevented Hamilton from giving utterance to such a sophism, and from entrusting his honour to the charge of a woman who herself had none. And this none knew better than Sir William himself.

This one-time servant in an inn had no idea of seeking a husband from her own class, of taking a waiter for her husband. She must have an Ambassador.

Better than all she loved idleness, luxury, extravagance and adulation. She had played at being in love, and she had reached the goal she aimed at. Mme. Le Brun, who knew her well, said: "She was very artful, and by these means she made Hamilton marry her."

It would seem—and Mr Walter Sichel is also of this opinion—that during her stay in London, Emma and her mother went to see Payne's little daughter, whom Greville was supporting.

Shortly before leaving London, Emma received an interesting visitor in the person of Lawrence, the painter, who had been introduced to her at his own special request.

He had heard so much about her beauty and the wonderful Attitudes that he was most anxious to meet her. To Mr Lyson the great artist wrote the following letter referring to his visit: "A particular friend of mine promised to get me introduced at Sir William Hamilton's to see this wonderful woman you have doubtless heard of—Mrs Hart. . . I hear it is the most gratifying thing to a painter's eyes that can be, and I am frightened at the same time with the intimation that she will soon be Lady Hamilton, and I may not have such another opportunity."*

As soon as the marriage was announced Sir William and his bride-elect appeared in certain drawing-rooms, the society of which was not over fastidious or prudish. On August 23 Horace Walpole wrote to Miss Berry: "On Saturday evening I was at the Duke of Queensbury's (at Richmond, *s'entend*) with a small company, and there was Sir William Hamilton and Mrs Harte, who on the 3rd of next month, previous to their departure, is to be *Mme l'Envoyée à Naples*, the Neapolitan Queen having promised to receive her in that quality. Here she cannot be presented, where only such overvirtuous wives as the Duchess of Kingston and Mrs Hastings—who could go with a husband in each hand—are admitted. . . . But I forget to retract and make *amende honorable* to Mrs Harte. I had only heard of her Attitudes; and those in dumb show I have not yet seen. Oh, but she sings admirably; has a very fine, strong voice; is an excellent *buffa*, and an astonishing tragedian. She sang *Nina* in the highest perfection, and there her Attitudes were a whole theatre of grace and various expressions."†

The marriage took place in London on September 6, 1791. Emma signed the register with her own name, Emy Lyon; but the wedding cards bore the name of Miss Hart, by which she was generally known. The wit-

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

† *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. xv, p. 57.

nesses were the Marquess of Abercorn, a relation of Sir William on his mother's side, and L. Dutens.

The newly-married couple remained on in London for a few days, and did not see any necessity for shutting themselves up in seclusion. Lawrence had feared that the new Lady Hamilton would refuse to exhibit herself in the famous Attitudes or, at least, that her husband would forbid her to do so. He soon found out that he was mistaken. Romney, whose acquaintance Emma had renewed, wrote to his friend Hayley: "In my last letter I told you I was going to dine with Sir William Hamilton and his lady. In the evening of that day there was collected several people of fashion to hear her sing. She performed, both in serious and comic, to admiration, both in singing and acting; but her *Nina* surpasses everything I ever saw, and I believe as a piece of acting nothing ever surpassed it. The whole company was in an agony of sorrow. Her acting is simple, grand, terrible and pathetic. My mind was so much heated that I was for running down to Eartham to fetch you to see her."*

In London, Emma continued to pose as a patroness of art, and entertained her acquaintances with her success in Naples, her talents, the fulness of her voice and her triumphs. To Romney she related the brilliant offers which had been made to her in Naples, but Sir William said pleasantly that he had engaged her for life. He had indeed married the woman who knew so well how to play the comedy of love.

Hamilton and Emma were, of course, the talk of the town. Sir William had made himself the laughing-stock of all London. Those who could remember Emma in the old days when she performed at Dr Graham's or presided over the wild supper-parties at Up Park, or as Romney's model, or as the grisette whom Greville conducted to all the gay places in town, could not reconcile themselves to the fact that she was now rich, a person of importance, and the wife of a British Ambassador.

* Add. MSS. 30,805, f. 51.

This metamorphosis they affected to despise, not, as they pretended, in the interests of virtue, but to conceal their own envy and vexation.

It is a relief to turn to one who could at least clothe his bare thoughts in a witty form. On September 11 Horace Walpole wrote to Miss Berry: "A propos, Sir William Hamilton has actually married his gallery of statues, and they are set out on their return to Naples. I am sorry I did not see her Attitudes, which Lady D. (a tolerable judge) prefers to anything she ever saw."*

* *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. xv, p. 57.

CHAPTER III

The ways of the world—Lady Hamilton's education—Opinions of contemporaries—Her illiteracy—Her mother at the embassy—The Palazzo Sessa—The Attitudes—Lady Hamilton's presentation at the court of Naples—Her relations with Greville after her marriage—The Bishop of Derry at Naples—Relations of Emma with him, Romney and Featherstonehaugh.

EMMA was married. She had a title; she was the wife of an Ambassador. Like all women who drive a trade with their beauty, she had endured the tortures of Tantalus in her lust for gold, luxury and extravagance, pleasures for which they are ever ready to commit the most infamous actions. How often in the old days had she yearned with passionate longing for a lover who would clothe her in gold and silken raiment! She gave no thought to love, for that is a secondary consideration to a courtesan. To live on man and his passions constitutes her moral code, her ideal of happiness. Men make her their idol, poets find in her their inspiration, yet good cheer and perpetual idleness are her soul's highest aspirations.

In Emma's case the position she had reached far surpassed anything she had ever dreamt of. Even in the wildest flights of her imagination she had never conceived of a marriage that could not only retrieve the past, but give her a prominent place in the official and political world, which, to be sure, is not over sensitive on the subject of woman's virtue. Still less had she expected to enter the diplomatic sphere, to be received at Court and to become the bosom friend of a sovereign who was

a sister of the Queen of France, the daughter and the mother of an Empress. Could she anticipate that she would become a sort of Confidential Minister, directing the movements of armies and fleets, assuming the right of life and death, and playing a prominent part in a great Revolution! Could she dream that her name would be handed down to posterity linked inseparably to that of one of the greatest men of her day! However wild her conduct may have been, Emma never indulged in such extravagant hopes.

She knew that, had such been her ambition, her lack of every qualification of birth, education, character and connection would have formed, especially in aristocratic England, an insurmountable barrier in the way of its accomplishment.

As yet she was unconscious of the passion that lay dormant in her soul. She could not know that the decline of the century that had witnessed her abandoned youth was to produce upheavals which would open broad avenues to the most extravagant ambitions. Few of those whose names were soon to ring throughout Europe could have harboured any notion of the future that lay before them.

If, as a young man of twenty, Napoleon ever turned his thoughts to the throne of France, where Louis XVI then sat, little did he dream that on the ruins of that throne he was to raise up an empire! Murat and Bernadotte could not yet see the crowns that were destined for their heads. The smuggler Massena, the dyer Lannes, the cooper Ney, Sergeant Hoche of the *Gardes Françaises*, Fouché the *Oratorien*, and many more could not yet see themselves generals, ministers, dukes, and princes.

When, by one of those extraordinary chances that occur but once perhaps in a thousand years, a man is plucked from the midst of a multitude and set on a pinnacle he never hoped to scale, he will find it hard to keep his footing there. Murat failed; even Napoleon failed — the

dizzy height was their undoing. Many perished on the scaffold. Many declined promotion, from motives of modesty or of discretion, for the Revolutionary Tribunal was ever at their heels, ready to pounce upon them at the least failure.

It is not given to all to play great parts and to be able to meet the exigencies of a high position, into which they have not been initiated by family tradition, by education, by familiarity with society and court circles, by the training of character and will, or by the habit of prompt decision. It remained to be seen whether Emma Lyon would be able to maintain her position in the lofty sphere to which Hamilton's love had raised her.

From the very start it was clear that she possessed the necessary talent to play the part fittingly. The married woman was simply a new character which she set about studying, and rendered to the best of her ability. To her infatuated husband it seemed that she succeeded to perfection, but perhaps he was too easily satisfied. Besides,what sentiments had prompted him to choose for his wife this woman who had been the mistress of so many before him? Beauty is something, but it is not all that a man looks for in the guardian of his honour. It is not enough to draw a veil over her past, to make an honourable woman of a courtesan. Some say that Sir William married her because he saw in her a bearing, an intelligence and a general superiority that in his eyes more than made up for all that she lacked in birth, education and virtue. Such a view is obviously impossible.

Though by nature sensible and matter-of-fact, Emma had illusions, which her lovers shared, and one of these was that she was gifted with unusual intelligence. She had pretensions also to wit, but Mme. Le Brun says: "She possessed no wit, although she was indeed very much given to biting and disparaging remarks, and this to such a degree that they formed the whole burden of her conversation." So she cannot have been very entertaining, for "Mockery," says La Bruyère, "often be-

tokens a lack of wit." Jealousy too, maybe, prompted this new-made lady's sarcasms.

By nature Hamilton was far from being a fool, but his infatuation brought him perilously near it. His first marriage had called forth little of the love of which he was capable, and he was now in the grip of one of those passions that occur in later life and which make up by their intensity for the long years of barrenness. Once he had committed this act of folly he could but seek to justify himself by repeating the old, inadequate reasons that had led him to take the step.*

He was intimately acquainted with certain episodes in his wife's early life, but, had he known all, he would still have found a thousand excuses for her conduct in her circumstances, misfortune, beauty, youth and innocence. Her very failings were to him virtues and excellences. He lived in a fool's paradise, enjoying, in Emma's company, the peace of mind that springs from the possession of a good woman's love. He deliberately closed his eyes to the past and refused to be concerned about the future.

When a man marries he generally chooses a wife whose education is complete. Sir William knew that Emma had much to learn, and, as soon as they were married, he set about teaching her the ways and manners, the language and idioms of polite society. When obliged to absent himself, he did not lose sight of her deficiencies, but filled his letters with sound advice. Several of these, written in the year 1792, when the Ambassador was hunting with the King at Persano, still exist. They display not, as might be expected, an elderly and infatuated lover, but a wise and sensible husband who, in spite of his great affection for his wife, was fully aware that she needed to be guided in the sphere to which her marriage had given her access. Taking into consideration the good and bad points of his pupil, he dealt out the necessary advice gently and affectionately. Although he flattered her much, and humoured her new airs and

* Pascal says "the heart has reasons, that reason cannot know."

vanities, he was not blind to her shortcomings or, what is rarer still, to the influence she exercised upon men.

He still made her take lessons in French, Italian, music and singing. By filling up her time he may have wished to keep her from the corrupting and enervating influence of idleness and the voluptuous atmosphere of Naples; or it may merely have been to develop her talents and give her an education, the lack of which was sometimes so painfully evident. On January 8, 1792, he wrote to her: "Nothing pleases me more, than to hear you do not neglect your singing. It would be a pity, as you are near the point of perfection."* Later on Nelson, who was either more lyrical or more deeply in love, assured her that she surpassed the greatest singers.† Hamilton contented himself with treating her as a promising pupil who had still much to learn. His attitude was rather that of a schoolmaster; thus, on one occasion, he wrote: "By the bye, I must tell you, that *accept* and except are totally different. You always write: 'I did not *except* of the invitation,' when, you know, it should be *accept*."‡ In short, he was much more anxious to rectify her grammar and spelling than to provide her with sound moral principles. In the first place he was not very well suited to act the moralist, and, besides, it was rather late to try and arouse in her feelings that can never be taught, because the soul must absorb them during childhood and youth in the atmosphere of a healthy home. Emma could not possess the dignity, delicacy and consummate tact that distinguished women owe to their parentage, their education, and their associations of refinement and culture. Hamilton was never to succeed in giving to his

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 149.

† In a letter written in 1801, the Queen of Naples paid her the same compliment: "La Nina dopo che si e sentita cantare colla vostra espressione non è piu sopportabile il sentirla do altra." *Carteggio* XIII, by Palumbo. This is one of the few letters which the Queen wrote in Italian.

‡ *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 171.

wife or to his home the indefinable charm, the subtle breath that fills the house of the virtuous woman. This could not be, for, in spite of his superiority, Hamilton was not to be the master in his home; he was to remain in the toils of the fair enchantress who had made him marry her. He never had any real influence, and was always kept in the background. Gradually, he passed under the yoke he was to endure until the end of his days, a yoke imposed on him by a woman who had been a prostitute!

When giving advice to his wife, Hamilton certainly affected the tone of a schoolmaster or a father, but for all that he did not abdicate his rights as a husband, but claimed them with delicacy and dignity. Emma owed him a great deal more even than she suspected, and, although Hamilton may have guessed that she had very little real feeling, he fondly hoped that the gratitude of which she loved to boast was indeed sincere. He did not dare to tell her of his doubts, for he was not altogether free from the apprehension which an elderly husband feels in his dealings with a wife who is much younger than himself. He was afraid of wounding her feelings by letting her guess that he doubted her sincerity. In the following letter, however, he gave her to understand what he expected from her: "The effusion of tenderness, with regard to me in your letter, is very flattering; I know the value of it, and will do all I can to keep it alive. We are now one flesh, and it must be our study to keep that flesh as warm and comfortable as we can. I will do all in my power to please you, and I do not doubt of your doing the same towards me."* (January 10, 1792.)

There were many weak points in the plan here unfolded; it will suffice to note the gross epicureanism of this letter. When one cannot raise people to one's own standard, one must be content to come down to their level. Sir William was not a diplomatist for nothing!

In the course of this study, Sir William Hamilton will

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 154.

often be spoken of as an old man, but the phrase must not be misunderstood. This epithet is used simply on account of his age, for, although he was seventy-three when he died, Sir William was not decrepit, and his intellect remained unimpaired. He was in full possession of all his faculties and had great muscular strength, which he was very fond of exhibiting, and which he regarded as a victory that he, the husband of so young a woman, had won over old age. It would be a mistake to attribute to his increasing age the weakness which he showed towards his wife. That was a matter of character, not of years. A man of thirty, with the same disposition, would have been just as blind, and would have allowed himself to be duped in exactly the same manner by a wife as charming and as wily as Emma. Like all women of her kind, whatever talent she possessed she used in deceit and dissimulation.

When giving advice to his wife, Hamilton was careful not to discourage her. Young women, and more especially those of a certain class, do not care for advice of which they are so much in need; still less do they care to be lectured. These remonstrances seem to reproach them with their low origin; their pride suffers, they take offence, and before long break out into open revolt. Hamilton was well aware of this, and took care to treat his wife with every possible regard, and to flatter her continuously. If he had to remonstrate with her, his words were wrapped in silk and cotton-wool. She seemed to inspire him with quite as much dread as love, and he approached her with about as much assurance as might be shown by a man treading on eggs. If he had anything to ask of her, he did it in circuitous and involved sentences; he was afraid to speak his mind freely or to look her straight in the eyes. He seemed to fear touching her, as though she were still soiled by the filth from which he had dragged her. He trembled lest he might incur her displeasure.

All this does not give a favourable impression of the

young bride, for only violent and intolerant natures require to be handled with such circumspection. When her husband gave her counsel, he did so in the most fatherly manner and softened the reproach by many tender compliments. Hamilton knew that such tyrannical women as Emma are delighted to see a strong man grovelling at their feet, and it was, no doubt, with the intention of flattering her vanity as a pretty woman and a lady that he wrote: "I would not be married to any woman, but yourself, on earth, for all the world."*

This was great commendation for, in choosing his first wife, Hamilton had not entirely overlooked the question of fortune.† He surrounded her with the most loving care, urging her to follow every whim and fancy, for he knew that this advice would be acceptable. His one aim was to make her an elegant doll, irreproachable in manner and language, but not a woman in the higher and nobler sense of the word.

When Hamilton was away hunting in Calabria with King Ferdinand, he was in constant communication with his wife. On Jauary 9 he wrote: "Amuse yourself, my dear Emma!" And again, on January 11: "A picture would not content me; your image is more strongly represented on my heart, than any that could be produced by human art."‡ All lovers write in this strain. Occasionally, however, in the midst of these compliments, the more cautious side of Hamilton's nature peeped out: "God knows, we have no secrets; nor, I hope, ever shall."§ . . . "I will allow, however, that a beautiful young woman feeling herself well dressed will have a sort of confidence, which will add greatly to the lustre

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, January 6, 1792, vol. ii, p. 145.

† The first Lady Hamilton was a Miss Barlow. She had one daughter who died at an early age. M. André Bonnefons thought Sir William was a confirmed bachelor. (*Marie-Caroline*, ch. ii.)

‡ *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 156.

§ *Idem.*, vol. ii, p. 168.

of her eye; but take my word, that, for some years to come, the more simply you dress, the more conspicuous will be your beauty, which, according to my idea, is the most perfect I have yet met with, take it all in all."*

During the early days of wedded life it is necessary to be thus lavish of praise. It is the language and the currency of love. Perhaps Sir William was ill-advised to indulge in such excessive admiration, but with a simple, sweet, timorous nature such as his it is the natural expression of love, especially when there is no thought of jealousy.

The new Lady Hamilton was anything but simple, sweet and timorous. The difference of age may perhaps excuse her if she did not love her husband, but it is doubtful whether there was so much as a spark of affection or even of gratitude in her heart. On every occasion she boasted so much of these sentiments that it is impossible to doubt her word—or to trust it. It is impossible to be certain of such as she. It would be foolish to attach the same importance to these assurances from her as they would carry if uttered by an upright and straightforward woman.

In spite of Emma's marvellous assurance, so completely belied by the modest and innocent expression of her lovely face, it was not without hesitation that she entered the new world to which her husband had introduced her. Feminine instinct told her that every word, every guesture would be noted and commented on without mercy. But women like Emma soon overcome any such misgivings. With money and assurance a beautiful woman, especially when she has the advantage of being the wife of a British Ambassador, can force open every door. Surely the sordid past would be forgotten in the glorious present. Who would be so ill-bred as to look for the blemishes beneath the flashing diamonds!

She was now fully equipped with the language and manners of polite society; she had served her apprentice-

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 174.

ship in the circle of the Ambassador's friends during the years that had preceded her marriage. After such a training she thought herself an accomplished woman of the world, she would listen to no counsel and would rule over her indulgent husband and lead him into many foolish adventures. It is impossible to foresee the extraordinary fancies that will occur to women whom marriage has raised above their sphere. On one occasion Emma forced Sir William to go on board the *Lion*, with the result that the British Ambassador found himself in quarantine in the Bay of Naples. No doubt the artful minx had some particular reason for leading him into this ridiculous scrape, but her secret motive was never divulged. From on board the vessel, the British Ambassador wrote rather sheepishly to Acton, the Minister for the Navy: "Lady Hamilton, without reflecting and contrary to my opinion was tempted yesterday to go on board this ship before she had Pratick and of course, I was obliged to go on board also." (This admission gives a very clear idea of the servility with which he submitted to the domestic tyrant.) Hamilton went on to say that as there was not one case of sickness on board, he hoped to be at once released.* Since the first years of his marriage Sir William had evidently been deposed from his position as head of the family.

Before meeting Emma, Hamilton had led the life of a wealthy art connoisseur rather than that of a diplomatist. In his *Italian Journey* Goethe describes him as "a man of universal taste, who has roamed through all the realms of creation" and has found in a beautiful woman "a masterpiece of the Arch-Artist." The poet is mistaken in supposing Hamilton had travelled so much. After having been brought up with the future King George III, who remained his friend, he had been appointed in

* From an unpublished letter in the archives at Naples. Emma's behaviour was all the more unpardonable as this incident must have taken place in 1798 or 1799, that is to say during the Revolution. The *Lion* belonged to Nelson's fleet.

1764 Ambassador to the Court of Naples. He never asked to be relieved of his office and remained at this post for thirty-six years. All his tastes drew him closer to Italy, and he took the greatest interest in the country. In 1772 he had published his *Observations on Vesuvius*. He had gathered together some works of art that had escaped the fury of the volcano, and they formed a precious collection that was the chief object of his solicitude. Later on, some of them fetched very high prices. In the year 1791 he was sixty-one, but, judging by his portraits, he did not look his age. He was very handsome, with the full and healthy countenance of a man of forty. Had his features been less delicate and his bearing less distinguished he might have been taken as a model for the classical type of John Bull, so dear to caricaturists. But although, as a whole, the face is pleasing, there is something too credulous about his smile. In other portraits of an earlier age, Hamilton has much the same appearance. The nose is refined and well shaped; the general expression of his face prepossessing.

His wife was then about twenty-six or twenty-eight years of age, and her appearance had not changed since she first came to Naples. She was in the full bloom of her transcendent beauty. The *Rivoluzione Napolitana* gives the most ravishing portrait of her at this period. If Lady Hamilton was remarkable for her attractions, she was not less remarkable for the almost diabolical skill with which she turned them to account. She was a born courtesan, skilled in her trade, every secret of which she knew by instinct or experience. Long practice had taught her what was her most potent fascination. In Naples she did not forget the success that had crowned her wonderful Attitudes and the poses that set off the voluptuous lines of her figure, and she began once more to give these performances, in spite of her new dignity as wife of the Ambassador. Hamilton, who was incapable of opposing any of her wishes, not only made no

attempt to stop these artistic performances, but encouraged her, and seemed flattered by her success. In London she must have seen Garrick, whose acting was the most noble and pathetic expression of the great emotions of the soul. She took the great actor as her model, endeavouring to express the most tender sentiments and violent passions a woman is capable of feeling. Her gestures could make her audience shudder; her eyes could fill them with terror or make them weep with pity. "You speak to us with your hands," the old Romans cried to the comedians whose gestures rivalled the eloquence of Cicero,* and these words might justly have been applied to Lady Hamilton's acting. However successful she may have been in these performances, it must be admitted they were an intellectual recreation unworthy of a clever woman, whom the consciousness of her own dignity would have kept from taking part in such an exhibition. With a coquette, however, things are different. The indulgent guests who responded to Lady Hamilton's invitations were soon reconciled to this eccentric form of entertainment, which afforded them the occasion of admiring the lovely face and form of their hostess. The more fastidious members of society refused to receive the Ambassador's wife or to accept her invitations, but the King and Queen of Naples were more tolerant. However, Mme. de Boigne relates that Marie-Caroline had at first been disinclined to receive Emma at Court and that Sir William had persuaded Mme. d'Osmond to intercede with the sovereign. Political interests and their own inclination, however, soon combined to draw them towards Emma, whose charm and beauty were irresistible. Goethe, as we know, had been deeply impressed by her strange power of fascination; this she brought to bear on the Queen, of whose mind and heart she soon took complete possession. She knew that a beautiful woman may act much as she pleases and yet meet with indulgence. It had been her

* This quotation is taken from Garat's *Memories sur M. Suard.*

LADY HAMILTON
From a painting after Westall in the Collection of Sir Robert Harvey, Bt.

ambition to become the Queen's friend, and, once again, her audacity was crowned with success. How cautious she was in her behaviour, how careful to avoid the slightest breach of etiquette! Frederica Brun, who saw her in Naples in 1796, says that at this period there were no evil reports concerning her. (Nelson had not yet appeared on the scene.) She further remarks: "Lady Hamilton is a magnificent Bacchante,"—which might be considered a somewhat doubtful compliment, but, of course Frederica was merely referring to the Attitudes. This strange and novel performance had delighted her, as it did all who witnessed it—even that scoffer Horace Walpole. Of Lady Hamilton's singing Frederica Brun says: "Her voice is rich and beautiful and her gestures are always in perfect harmony with her singing. She has the good taste not to let her acting encroach on her duties as a hostess. I only saw her for one moment, when she showed herself in the attitude of my Iphigenia. She is a remarkably handsome woman, and reminds one of the Bacchante of the sarcophagus in the courtyard of the Belvedere."*

So much has been said about Emma's Attitudes and her various talents that it is necessary to quote the testimony of those who witnessed her performances. Various quotations will be found at the end of this volume.† It must be remembered, however, that the art in which Lady Hamilton excelled leaves no more traces behind it than singing or acting. In forming a judgment after the lapse of years posterity can only rely on the impressions left by contemporaries. Even so, these cannot be trusted implicitly.

The applause that greets an artist is not necessarily a proof of her talent. It may be addressed to her as a hostess, as a friend, or to her beauty, graciousness and

* *Voyages*, pp. 157 and 333. All Emma's contemporaries do not agree as to Emma's faultless beauty. Mrs Trench says her feet were hideous.

† See, in the Appendix, the opinions expressed by some of Lady Hamilton's contemporaries.

social rank. Lady Hamilton's admirers may have been carried away by the enthusiastic atmosphere surrounding them, by the brilliancy of a thousand lights, by the lovely music, and, above all, by the irresistible charm of youth and beauty united in the person of a celebrated woman, whose disposition was bold and free. Such considerations may well have helped to create a pleasing illusion. However, according to Mme. Le Brun and Mme. de Boigne, when the performance was over and the artist reappeared amongst her guests robed in modern clothing, the spell was broken, and she seemed incapable of becoming once more a simple, gracious hostess. The part she had been playing still lingered about her, making her affected and self-conscious. Her whole bearing was stiff and pretentious, and as much at variance with art as with the simplicity, native ease and good taste of a born lady.

The new Lady Hamilton had nevertheless done her best to acquire the tone and manners of the circle to which she now belonged. Certainly her letters were still full of faults of spelling, *endead* for *indeed*, *ous* for *us*, but she took good care that her manners and conduct should be above reproach. By dint of observing those around her, and of studying herself closely, she had very fairly well succeeded in training herself, and could stand the ordeal of being presented at Court. The Queen of Naples had been obliged to set aside one rule of etiquette, according to which no woman who had not previously been presented to the sovereign of her country could appear at the Court of Naples. It was notorious that the Queen of England had refused to receive Lady Hamilton, but Marie-Caroline's infatuation for the English beauty over-ruled this consideration, and it was with a joyous heart that Emma crossed the threshold of the palace and appeared before Their Majesties. Lady Malmesbury, who was present on this occasion, said: "She really behaved as well as possible, and quite wonderfully, considering her origin and education."*

* Lady Malmesbury to Lady Elliot. Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

There is nothing so very astonishing in the fact if it be remembered that her husband coached her in every detail of the part she had to play, and that, being an excellent comedian, she had no difficulty in playing it to her credit.

It was a clever move of Lady Hamilton to have kept her mother with her in Naples. Mrs Cadogan, "your good mother" as Hamilton and Nelson vied with each other in calling her, found it quite natural that her worthy son-in-law should allow her £100 a year. She looked after the household, but her interest was concentrated on the kitchen. Sometimes, indeed, she figured at the table sitting on her daughter's right, but generally the good soul preferred to take her meals alone, as this entailed less constraint on both sides. She may also have wished to leave her daughter and son-in-law to themselves, and spare them the mortification of any breach of manners that might escape her in the presence of their guests.

The newly married couple occupied the Palazzo Sessa, which still exists. It is a lordly old mansion, built in the Spanish style, so many examples of which are to be seen in Naples. Towards the end of the 18th century the family of the Marchese Sessa left the town, and their residence was let out in flats, just as it is at the present time. The Ambassador occupied the first and second floors. After passing through various courtyards and porticoes, the house is reached by a narrow street. Over the last portal is a coat-of-arms bearing three towers. A duke, two counts, and several other notable people now occupy the house, but it has a forlorn appearance, reminiscent of the old French mansions on the Ile St Louis, in Paris. But in Naples it often happens that the houses of the wealthiest people appear old and neglected, and the Palazzo Sessa may have been in this same condition when Hamilton lived there. The rooms are very spacious, and look out on the sea. The Palazzo lies half-way up the hill on which Naples is built, facing the bay, with a view of Vesuvius and Capri. On the second floor was an octagonal drawing-room adorned with mirrors. It is

said that Emma rehearsed her Attitudes and poses in this room.

No doubt the vogue attained by her Attitudes put her in mind of Romney, the artist who had first admired her talent, and she wrote to him with cordial and sincere affection: "Rejoice with me, my dear sir, my friend, my more than father, believe me, I am still that same Emma you knew me. If I could forget for a moment what I was, I ought to suffer. Command me in anything I can do for you here; believe me, I shall have a real pleasure. Come to Naples, and I will be your model, anything to induce you to come, that I may have an opportunity to show my gratitude to you. . . We have many English at Naples—Ladys Malmsbury, Malden, Plymouth, Carnegie, Wright, etc. They are very kind and attentive to me; they all make it a point to be remarkably civil to me. You will be happy at this, for you know what prudes our Ladys are."*

They were not all as particular as Emma would have us believe; but they were polite to her, and she was very proud to be able to tell this to Romney. Some of them, indeed, even condescended to call on her. London was at such a safe distance, they could not fear their friends' remonstrances. Lady Hamilton made herself as agreeable as she possibly could. She was anxious to hide the insipidity of her conversation, the only charm of which was a winning smile that appealed successfully to the male sex. For the entertainment of her guests she often performed her Attitudes, which always evoked an outburst of enthusiasm. Her delighted husband commissioned Frederick Rehberg, historical painter to the King of Prussia, to make sketches of all the tableaux represented by his wife.

Although Emma spent her whole life acting, there was one part which she never thought of playing. She forgot she was the mother of a little girl. Truly, it would have been waste of time and talent to trouble about such

* Morrison MSS. 199.

a role, for there would have been no admiring spectators to see her in the maternal Attitude. Besides, she did not wish people to know that she had a child, and her husband had probably lost sight of this fact, when in January 1792 a letter from Greville brought the matter once more to his mind. He wrote to Hamilton about the education and welfare of the child, whom he politely called Lady Hamilton's *protegée*. Up to this period Greville had provided for her, paying £65 a year to the people who looked after her, but he was now practically a ruined man, and for this reason asked his uncle to take charge of the little girl, assuring him that this step was not inspired by any ill-feeling on his part.

It is curious that, although Emma could so easily forget the existence of her daughter and abandon her to the tender mercies of strangers, she showed the greatest solicitude towards her grand-mother. She was certainly very fond of her relations, and in spite of her selfishness, sometimes proved that she had a warm heart. It has already been stated that she never separated from her homely mother. She entrusted her with the care of the household, simply that she might have a pretext for giving her an allowance of £100 a year. She supported her grand-mother, Mrs Kidd, and her letters to this aged relative are full of tender affection. She also came to the assistance of an uncle, Thomas Kidd, and other relations of whose existence she would have been unaware had her own fortunes been less brilliant. When, in such poor families, whose only object is money, one member acquires great wealth, the others do not worry themselves as to the means by which it was won, but gather round like wasps on a ripe fruit, eager to have their share of the profit. The rumour of Emma's stupendous elevation had spread throughout England, and petitions poured in on her from all sides. She acted generously towards all who appealed to her. She may have been really good-hearted, but it may be that it flattered her vanity to play the Lady Bountiful, and that

by her generosity she sought to silence those who envied her. However, it is not necessary to scrutinize the motives that guided her, the essential point is that she was indeed kind and generous. On one occasion she wrote to Greville: "You must know, I send my grandmother every Cristmas twenty pounds, and so I ought . . . As Sir William is ill I cannot ask him for the order but if you will get the twenty pounds and send it to her, you will do me the greatest favour."*

It is evident that she had come to share Greville's views, and considered him merely as a friend. He answered in the same strain, and lent her the money. Perhaps some secret scheme lurked behind Emma's show of friendship towards her former lover. Hamilton had been seriously ill, and she had been forced to face the possibility of being left a widow. "He as been 15 days in bed with a billious fever, and I have been almost as ill as him with anxiety, aprehension and fatige."† These words seemed to spring from her heart, and, indeed, they may have been sincere; but perhaps they really concealed a secret and more interested thought. She had adopted the hypocritical tone of good society, and could, like all its members, express sentiments she did not feel. Perhaps she would have been glad to ensnare Greville once more, and, by showing him how much she had improved in every way, suggest to him the idea of marrying her, should she become a widow, and inherit Hamilton's large fortune. Emma still loved Greville. Moreover, her social position was very dear to her, and if she could marry him she need not return to a life of obscurity. It is amusing to note how she loved to boast of the grandeur of her position, as, for instance, in the following letter from Caserta to Miss Burt, who had written to her on behalf of her grandmother, dated December 26, 1792: "I wrote you a Long Letter Last march, but I am affraid you never got it, which I am sorry for, as their was a Long account of my reception

* Morrison MSS. 215. † *Idem.*

at the Court of naples; endead the Queen has been so Kind to me I cannot express to you, she as often invited me to Court, and her magesty and nobility treats me with the most kind and affectionate regard. I am the happiest woman in the world; my husband is the best and most tender of husbands, and treats me and my mother with such goodness and tenderness; endead I love him dearly. If I coud have my dear grandmother with me how happy I shoud be."*

She was so happy herself that she felt kindly disposed towards everyone. Since she had been received at Court her pride was gratified, and her cup of happiness full to the brim. Realising that in a monarchical country it is a supreme honour to be admitted into the intimacy of the sovereign, it is easy to understand how happy Emma was, when writing to Greville, to dwell on her brilliant lot and the exceptional favour bestowed on her. Her inmost being must have thrilled with delight when, on June 2, 1793, she wrote to Greville with an affectation of modesty and a slight touch of irony: "Yesterday the King and me sung duetts for 3 hours. It was but bad, *as he sings like a King*."† And again: "I had been with the Queen the night before alone, *en famille*, laughing, singing, etc., but at the drawing-room I kept my distance, and payd the Queen as much respect as tho' I had never seen her before, which pleased her much; but she shewed me great distinction that night, and told me several times how she admired my good conduct."‡

No doubt it was after having this occasion of appreciating Lady Hamilton's tact and discretion that the Queen saw fit, in the interest of her policy, to form a closer connection with her. Her position enabled her to render great services to Marie-Caroline, for, as Mme.

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

† Morrison MSS. 221. Napoleon made much the same remark after having seen his sister, Caroline Murat, act: "C'est royalement mal joué!"

‡ Morrison MSS. 221.

Le Brun remarks: "Lady Hamilton, being very indiscreet, informed Her Majesty of many small diplomatic secrets which the Queen turned to the advantage of her Kingdom."* Moreover, a longing for expansion and a strange tenderness of feeling drew her towards the former prostitute of the London streets, who soon became the *favorissime*, the Lamballe and Polignac of this sister of Marie-Antoinette. She wrote to her every day, sending her sometimes two or three letters. She overwhelmed her with attentions, consulting her about the fashions, the entertainments she was to give, concerts, suppers, and tableaux. In fact it was Emma who organised the amusements at the Court. The Queen's favour turned her head, and it is questionable whether all the details she wrote to Greville can be trusted. Perhaps she wished to dazzle him by her success, in the interest of the plan she might possibly wish to carry out in the future. Thus, on December 19, 1794, she wrote from Caserta: "The Queen has had the goodness to supply me with horses, an equerry, and her own servant in livery every day. In short, if I was her daughter she could not be kinder to me, and I love her with all my heart. My dear Sir William is very well, and as fond of me as ever; and I am, as women generally are, ten thousand times fonder of him than I was, and you would be delighted to see how happy we are,—no quarelling, no crossness, nor laziness.† All nonsense is at an end, and everybody that sees us are edified by our example of conjugal and domestick felicity. Will you ever come and see us? You shall be received with kindness from us both, for we have both obligations to you for having made us acquainted with each other . . . Do send me a plan, how I could situate little Emma, poor thing; for I wish it."‡

* That this was the case may be gathered from Emma's letter to Greville quoted on page 65.

† Naturally, for her husband executed all her wishes and approved of all she did. There was no reason for disagreement.

‡ Morrison MSS. 250.

In the following year (1794) Greville was appointed Vice-Chamberlain, and sent the news of his promotion to his former mistress, whose hearty congratulations prove how much she prized his friendship. She wrote from Castellamare on September 16, 1794: "I congratulate you, my dear Mr Greville, with all my heart on your appointment to the Vice-Chamberlainship, you have well merited it, and all your friends must be happy at a change so favourable, not only for your pecuniary circumstances, as for the honner of the situation. May you long enjoy it with every happiness that you deserve! I speak from my heart. I don't know a better, honester, or more worthy man than yourself."*

A clever and cultured woman would, in Emma's position, have been happy to listen to the distinguished men who frequented her husband's house and discussed the extraordinary events that had shaken Europe during the last few years. It was not so with Emma. She felt no need of listening or taking part in the conversation. Although she was happy to be present on these occasions, she was conscious of her own insignificance, and excused herself by remarking with a winning smile that she did not care for politics. In truth, her intellect was not sufficiently quick or penetrating to fill up the gaps left by a somewhat rudimentary education. All her power lay in her beauty and the pretty airs she affected. As she wished to play an important part wherever she went, she felt that she must carefully avoid all conversations that were not frivolous and which would betray, in the most humiliating fashion, her intellectual insufficiency. On April 19, 1795, she wrote to Greville: "Send me some news, political and private; for, against my will, *owing to my situation here*, I am got into politicks and I wish to have news for our dear much loved Queen, whom I adore. Nor can I live without her for she is to me a mother, friend and everything. If you coud know her as I do, how you woud adore her. For she is the first

* Morrison MSS. 246.

woman in the world; her talents are superior to every woman's in the world, and her heart is the most excellent and strictly good and upright."*

In this respect Lady Hamilton resembled Mme de Sévigné, who thought Louis XIV a great King for the sole reason that he had condescended to dance a minuet with her. Marie-Caroline was not as straightforward as the enthusiastic writer delighted in asserting. Emma was happy and proud because the Queen treated her with such marked attention, and liked to imagine that these favours were a proof of the sovereign's attachment to her. Marie-Caroline certainly cared for her favourite, but political considerations strengthened her friendship for the woman whose low origin, and stormy past were not unknown to her, and who had been the Ambassador's wife years before he married her. If it be remembered how great a distance separates a Queen from other women, and that at this period it was most unusual for a sovereign to treat as an equal any lady of her Court, even though she might be the wife of a British Ambassador and of unsullied fame, it must be concluded that very powerful considerations only could have induced this proud daughter of the House of Habsburg to stoop to avowed friendship with such a woman as Emma Lyon. Setting aside the strong impulse of personal feeling that drew her towards the fascinating Englishwoman, her principal object must have been to conciliate the British nation by the marks of distinction she bestowed on their Ambassador in Naples. The Queen was well aware that, in the midst of the great events that shook the very foundations of old Europe, Britain could be of the greatest help to the Kingdom of Naples.

In the course of the year 1795 Marie-Caroline communicated to her friend the contents of a confidential letter, in which Charles IV of Spain informed his brother, the King of Naples, that he had had enough of the demands of England and would submit to them no

* Morrison MSS. 263.

longer, adding that he had decided not only to make peace with France but to become her ally—a course which he advised Ferdinand to follow. However natural this action may seem under the stress of circumstances, it proves that the Queen placed absolute confidence in her friend, and that they kept no secrets from each other. It is on this that Colletta has founded his theory of the relations existing between the two women.*

It would seem that the Ambassador's wife, the "spy,"

* Colletta, the Neapolitan historian, was the first to mention the scandalous story, but he does not substantiate his statements. M. A. Bonnefons declares that there is not a word in Marie-Caroline's letters to Lady Hamilton that justifies such an accusation. "The Queen was, by nature, so nervous, fantastical and unconventional that she would most certainly have betrayed herself by some unguarded word. This does not occur in her correspondence. Her letters to Lady Hamilton are full of hatred of France and admiration for England, but, from a moral point of view, they are above reproach." (A. Bonnefons, *Le traité de neutralité*, ch. ix.)

M. A. Gagnière, who has written a valuable work on Marie-Caroline, does not share M. Bonnefons' opinion: "All the private letters which the Queen wrote to Lady Hamilton as her friend have disappeared. The Ambassadress only retained those referring to political matters, the publication of which could not affect the Queen. . . . The private letters were far more numerous than the others. Without mentioning the gaps that occur continually in this correspondence, it is curious to note that all the letters of the year 1797 were destroyed. And yet, when writing to his superior on December 14, 1798, Nelson mentioned that the Queen and Emma had been for years in the habit of writing to each other every day."

As Colletta was the first to start these evil reports, he no doubt believed them to be true; "When Lord Nelson showed that he was wildly in love with Lady Hamilton, the Queen, who up to this period had treated Milady with contempt, as a Queen dealing with an adventuress, suddenly laid aside all haughtiness and, mindful of the future, sought to win her affection by appealing to her vanity. Henceforth, in the palace, at the theatre, in the public gardens, Emma was always to be seen with the Queen. They even took their meals together and shared the same bath and bed. The beautiful Emma was capable of any corruption." It is easy to believe this when reading in one of her letters to Greville these words of unblushing cynicism, that reveal the habitual direction of her thoughts; "If that is not to be, I will accept of nothing. I will go to London, there go into every excess of vice till I die, a miserable broken-hearted wretch." Surely a woman of twenty-

as M. Gagnière calls her, used her all-powerful influence in obtaining all she wanted from the Queen. It was in acknowledgment of these invaluable services that, later on, she tried in vain to obtain a reward from the British Government.

M. Gagnière has published the following letters written by Marie-Caroline to Lady Hamilton. They are convincing.

DEAR MILADY,

Another courier from Spain of the 28th (April, 1795). There is no mention of peace. Bilbao has capitulated. All Biscay is in the hands of the French. But the Court and the Minister are quiet. Alcudea told our Minister "*that this loss was nothing, and that soon there would be a change for the better.*"

This is incomprehensible. The French General Monceny (Moncey) pays compliments to the Spanish couriers and delivers passports to them. Saint Simon has been sent to guard Poncorvo and enter Castille. What does it all mean? I am quite at a loss.

The cipher is being made out. If I hear anything else you shall be told. But this turn of events is inconceivable.

Adieu. A thousand compliments to the Chevalier.

Yours for life,

CHARLOTTE.

five who could choose such a form of suicide, must indeed have been absolutely corrupt! And how bare-faced she must have been to write such words!

Pietro Colletta wrote a history of Naples under the Bourbons. As he took part in the events he relates his account cannot be considered quite impartial. He fought for the Republic in 1799, and escaped miraculously from the hands of the Counter-Revolutionists. He served under Murat. Having risen to the rank of general, he was for a short time Minister of War during the Revolution of 1820. He was next imprisoned and banished for life. It was during this exile that he wrote his history. It bears traces of the author's agitated life and his passions. We have sometimes consulted his work, but always with discretion.

MARIE-CAROLINE, QUEEN OF NAPLES

According to M. Gagnière the second letter is still more explicit.

My Very Dear Milady,

My head is so confused and I am so bewildered that I don't know what to do. I hope to see you to-morrow towards ten o'clock.

I enclose cipher sent from Spain by Galatone.* *Within twenty-four hours you must return it to me so that the King may find it in its place.* It contains information that will be of much interest to the British Government. I am happy to communicate it to them, and to show my attachment to their cause as well as the confidence I place in the worthy Chevalier. *Only I implore him not to compromise me.*

Adieu! How much we shall have to talk about to-morrow. Adieu!

Believe me to be

Your sincere friend,

Charlotte.†

In the margin Lady Hamilton wrote: "Copy of a letter from the Queen, April 29, 1795. Sir William was obliged to send the original document to England together with the copy of the cipher mentioned by Her Majesty."

On this occasion Emma rendered an important service to her country. In the Memoirs published under her name, this episode is not related as it is given here from authentic documents. They reproduce Palumbo's fantastical account. "One day as she was conversing familiarly with Ferdinand IV, according to the custom of that Court, various despatches were brought to the King. As, in general, he did not care about state affairs, after glancing over the contents of each letter he would

* Galatone was the Neapolitan Minister in Madrid.

† *La reine Marie-Caroline de Naples*, by A. Gagnière. Published by Ollendorff, Paris, 1886, pp. 42-44.

throw it on to the table. However, on this occasion, one letter, sealed with the arms of Spain, caught his attention. As soon as he had read it, instead of throwing it with the others, he put it in his pocket with great care, as though he wished to guard a secret. To Emma, who was accustomed to exercise close observation at Court, this new attitude of the King appeared suspicious. She bribed a page and persuaded him to take the letter out of the King's pocket for a few minutes, during which she made a copy of it."*

This is nothing but a legend. The first account is the only true and historical version. When taking a part in politics, Lady Hamilton's conduct was not so much inspired by true patriotism as by her violent hatred of the French and all republicans, a sentiment which was to be fostered in her by Nelson's influence. On some of the letters which she kept she wrote such notes as these: "Received: the happy day we received the joyful news of the great victory over the infernal French by the brave and gallant Nelson."†

To return to Emma's arrival in Naples after her marriage. Considering that nothing was changed in Emma's life, except that instead of being the mistress of the British Ambassador, she had become his legitimate wife, it would not be appropriate to speak of the newly-married couple's honeymoon. However, the serenity of the first days of their married life was disturbed by an outbreak of ill-humour on the part of Greville. His uncle's marriage had quite upset his equanimity. Although he was himself looking for a wife he would have liked Emma to content herself with amusing Hamilton during his old age in the character of an obliging lady-companion, but not as his legitimate spouse. There were his interests to be considered, and his only object in send-

* *Carteggio di Marie Caroline*, Prefazione, xiii. In the Morrison MSS. is the translation of the letter of Charles IV to Ferdinand, written by Lady Hamilton herself.

† *Carteggio*, xliv.

ing his mistress to Naples had been precisely to safeguard his interests by preventing his uncle from thinking of marriage. When he discovered that she had consulted her own interests only, Greville's dismay knew no bounds: this marriage had not figured on his programme. He first manifested his disgust by writing to Hamilton about "little Emma," for whose education he no longer felt any inclination to provide. He then gave further vent to his feelings in a letter which seems to have caused small satisfaction to his uncle, judging by Hamilton's words to Emma: "I send you Charles's letter, but do not lose it, as I will answer it when I return. You see, the line we have taken will put it out of the power of our enemies to hurt us."*

Was Charles to be considered an enemy? If he found it impossible to make the best of Emma's elevation, he had only himself to blame. Emma had a right to look after her own interests; and it is astonishing that, having known her from her early youth, he had not suspected she was capable of persuading any man, even though he were an Ambassador, into marrying her.

Hamilton had been rather brusque when discussing the matter with his nephew whom he had supplanted in the affection of his former mistress. On the contrary, Emma's attitude towards her former lover had been remarkably clever. She was more diplomatic than her husband. Long practice had taught her how to glide like an adder through the perilous ways of intrigue; consequently, without sacrificing the sentiments of love and hate that she entertained towards Greville, she succeeded in maintaining him in her orbit, and kept up a friendly correspondence with him. In Greville's letters, beneath the tone of commonplace courtesy, it is easy to see that the writer was aware that they might fall into his uncle's hands, and his anxiety not to give any cause for offence. To avoid arousing Hamilton's jealousy he adopted a somewhat ceremonious tone in assuring Emma of his friendly feel-

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 160.

ings. Had he used any terms of endearment, Hamilton might imagine the old love had not quite died out. If, on the other hand, he wrote coldly, this might lead him to believe his nephew despised him for having married his mistress. The only safe course was to express his feeling in the most courteous and conventional manner.

All Emma's friends were not like Greville. Happily for them many had not fallen in love with her, whilst others had been content to admire her beauty without letting themselves be ensnared by her charms, and to be satisfied with the momentary thrill of pleasure which she, in common with every other woman could afford them. Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh must be counted amongst the latter. Twenty years after they had separated "he still wrote to Emma in terms of respectful friendship as though their connection had left them only delightful remembrances."* Sir Harry was a wise man! He knew how to check the impulses of the heart and did not allow himself to be carried away by his passions.

Another of Emma's admirers deserves to be mentioned not only on account of the good humour with which he gave her up, but also because of the position which he occupied. Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol, was Bishop of Derry† and a very strange bishop he was. In religious matters he carried his eccentricities somewhat too far, but in the age of the *abbés de cour* the Anglican clergy were not more exemplary than their Italian brethren or the aristocratic members of the clergy in France, the most prominent figure of whom was Talleyrand, the Bishop of Autun. Bristol was a clever, original and amusing man, but absolutely unprincipled. His great wealth allowed him to wander throughout Europe with no other pursuit in view than his own amusement. In 1794, when, as

* *Emma, Lady Hamilton*, by A. Fauchier-Magnan.

† According to Palumbo the Earl of Bristol met Emma in Naples after she had become the wife of Hamilton. In spite of his official position and duties he was always travelling and was practically a sceptic,

usual, he was "travelling like a curate to get a Bishop's appetite,"* as he was fond of remarking, he made the acquaintance in Naples of Mme. Rietz, the Du Barry of Frederick William, King of Prussia. This young woman, who was of a somewhat fickle disposition, was then hurrying through Italy, in pursuit of the Chevalier de Saxe. During her stay in Naples, she conceived a violent wish to be presented at the Court of Ferdinand IV. In her case also there were many obstacles to be overcome. She was the daughter of a choir-master. The King had married her to one of the gardeners of Potsdam, but had not bestowed on her any title, and it was impossible for her to appear before Royalty. Bristol, who suddenly began to profess the most frantic admiration for this lady, swore that he would break down every obstacle. By dint of endless intrigue the sceptical Bishop managed to circumvent Frederick William, who, following an example that had occurred recently at the Court of France, granted his mistress the title of Countess of Lichtenau, together with a yearly income of 30,000 francs. Thus endowed and raised to the nobility, she was considered worthy to be presented at the Court of Ferdinand IV. The Lord-Bishop, who went daily to perform his devotions at the shrine of the choir-master's daughter, and who wore her miniature openly round his neck, was now able to present her at Court. Marie-Caroline took some interest in the beautiful German, and Lady Hamilton, the Queen's friend, overwhelmed her with attentions. Lord Bristol was at the same time paying homage to Emma, and they soon became the best of friends. Considering that they were both English and far from their country, it was not astonishing that two people who had the same liberal views on life, should rapidly be drawn towards each other. Every day the Bishop was to be seen hovering about the beautiful wife of the Ambassador. His intentions were, no doubt, of the most honourable nature, for he still gloried in displaying on his breast the portrait

* *Mémoires* by Dampmartin.

of the "divine Countess" of Lichtenau, a circumstance which, with his ecclesiastical reputation and Emma's well-known virtue, must have contributed to reassure Sir William as to the honour and loyalty of his sentiments. A little more reserve would have become an Anglican Bishop better, but in spite of his age—he speaks of a journey undertaken in 1772—he was altogether too forgetful of his sacred duties and, if he recalled them by chance, it was only to scoff at them—an attitude which showed as much bad taste as Emma's when she boasted to Greville, her former lover, of her "domestick happiness."

Lady Hamilton soon became Lord Bristol's *very dear Emma*. All we have of their correspondence dates from the year 1795, when Emma had already been married for four years. No doubt, being a loyal gentleman, the Ambassador did not read the letters addressed to his wife, otherwise he might have wondered at a certain epistle signed familiarly with the initial B., and terminating with these two lines:

> "Oh! Emma, who'd ever be wise,
> If madness be loving of thee?"

Had he read this letter Hamilton would have done well to say to himself that when a man marries a girl like Emma Lyon, he runs the risk of such adventures even from a bishop who was all the time in love with another woman.

On another occasion, Bristol asked Emma to intervene with the Queen of Naples.

"Emma! If that dear Queen of Naples does not write, herself, to Prince d'Oria for me, I won't look at your beautiful face these six months—*coûte qui coûte*."*

As soon as Bristol was obliged to leave Emma, he resumed his correspondence with her, calling her *the centre of his heart, the incomparable Emma, Quella senza para-*

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 244.

gona, as he put it in Italian. "This moment I received your *billet doux* and very dulcet it is."* Another letter to his *ever dearest Emma* ends with these words:

"Ever and invariably, dearest, dear Emma,
Most affectionately Yours,

B.

"You see I am but the second letter of your alphabet, though you are the first of mine."†

Finally, on November 24, 1798, the merry prelate sent the following threat from Milan. "If Sir William does not contrive to send me my passport, I will—I will excommunicate him, and send him to the devil before his time." The letter ends with these words, and bears no signature. In any case, Sir William was to be on his guard!‡

Beside the sincere admirers and fickle friends who thronged around Emma there were others, her companions not in the search of pleasure, but in the pursuit of art, with whom she seems to have had only pure intercourse, and amongst these Romney must probably be counted. Emma was anxious to keep his esteem or, at least, to prevent the artist who had known her only too well, whose favourite model she had been, from commenting on the new Lady Hamilton. When writing to him she took up an unexpected attitude and posed as a model wife. "Oh, my dear friend, for a time I own, through distress, my virtue was vanquished, but my sense of virtue was not overcome. How gratefull now, then, do I feel to my dear, dear husband that has restored

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton.* † *Idem.*

‡ *Idem.*, vol. i, p. 262. The Bishop's flippant ways made Emma feel rather uncomfortable. Referring to Bristol in one of her letters (December 19, 1794) she merely remarks: "He is very fond of me and very kind." In the *Mémoires de la Contesse de Lichtenau* there are some letters from Bristol to Lady Hamilton. They are most certainly apocryphal for in them Bristol uses the second person of the singular, which is not customary in English.

peace to my mind, that has given me honors, rank, and, what is more, innocence and happiness."*

This phrase is recommended to all repentant Magdalenes whom some simple-hearted man has married. Emma possessed a rich store of appropriate sentiments for all occasions!

* Morrison MSS. 199.

CHAPTER IV

Emma and the court—Marie-Caroline promises to receive her—The Neapolitan Government at the end of the eighteenth century—Ferdinand IV—Marie-Caroline—Acton and Gallo—Expedition to Egypt—Nelson in the Mediterranean—Lady Hamilton induces the Neapolitan Government to receive him—Sir William's curious position.

HAVING once chosen to wipe out the past and commit to oblivion Emma's former protectors, Hamilton showed only pride in the possession of such a lovely creature. If she incited him to make a show of her beauty, he certainly enjoyed producing her, as a connoisseur delights in the admiration bestowed on some work of art he possesses. In a letter dated January 7, 1792, he wrote to her: "I never doubted your gaining every soul you approach," and again, on January 10, 1792: "I am glad you have been to the Academy, and in the great world. . . You are certainly, the most domestic young woman I know; but you are young, and most beautiful; and it would not be natural if you did not like to shew yourself a little in public." On January 8, he wrote: "I always rejoice when I find you do not neglect your singing. I am, I own, ambitious of producing something extraordinary in you, and it is nearly done." *

At the time when Hamilton thus urged his wife to push her fortunes, she had only been married about three months. However bold she may have been, it was natural she should hesitate before stepping forth into the unfamiliar sphere that filled her with apprehension. Dur-

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, pp. 147 and 176.

ing the years of close intercourse with Hamilton and Greville, men of such unimpeachable breeding and manners, she had formed herself to the ways of the world, and had even occasion to study honourable women who came to her receptions. But she was clever enough to feel instinctively, and more keenly than another woman, the perils that awaited her in the world to which she had so eagerly desired to gain access. Once again Hamilton became her teacher and with unwearying complaisance undertook the social education of his wife. He taught her how to bear herself in the presence of royalty; how to act towards a prince, a cardinal or a minister. He showed her how to bow, how to address august personages, how to sit down when they allow it. The young bride assimilated lessons and rules, and thus equipped was all the more successful, as, fortunately for her, she was to be presented to a Queen who was not over particular about her connections, and had no right to be exacting. Probably the wily Ambassador had foreseen this result. He must have consulted the Queen concerning his plan to marry his beautiful mistress, for otherwise he would have risked losing his post. But at the Court of Naples he was *persona grata*, and Marie-Caroline welcomed his wife, whose popularity soon surpassed his own.

Political considerations undoubtedly played a great part in the sanction that was so readily granted to this extraordinary marriage. Dates are significant and must not be overlooked. Emma arrived in Naples in the spring of the year 1786, and it was not until September 6, 1791, that she became the wife of the Ambassador. Moreover, the marriage took place in London and not in Naples. It is probable that during these five years or, at least, during the latter part of this period, the Ambassador was negotiating with the Court of Naples to secure the Sovereigns' recognition of the future Lady Hamilton. In 1786 it seemed impossible to grant this favour, but by 1791 all obstacles had vanished. In the distance

was the roar of the French Revolution. At Mantua and at Pilnitz, Leopold II had declared himself ready to march against the rebels. It was only natural that Marie-Caroline should wish to help her brother in his endeavour to release their sister, whose hardships had increased since the unlucky flight to Varennes. But in order to act with some security, Marie-Caroline required ships to safeguard her ports. Her fleet was incapable of fighting against a naval force such as France could display, and the Emperor, her brother, had no vessels at all. Britain was the only nation that could protect the Kingdom of Naples, therefore it was necessary for Marie-Caroline to conciliate Britain, and it was not the moment to quarrel with the British Ambassador about a woman. Although the Queen was very religious, in this extremity, had Hamilton informed her he was about to marry the devil, she would gladly have given him her blessing, provided she might rely on Britain and be protected by her fleet. Thus even before her marriage Emma became the object of a political compromise.*

* There was no compromise at the Court of England however, for Queen Charlotte, a woman of great virtue, refused to receive the new Lady Hamilton. In 1800, the Elector of Saxony inflicted the same mortification on her. A letter from Horace Walpole indicates that, even before the wedding, Marie-Caroline had promised to acknowledge her as the wife of the Ambassador. In the same way Marie Antoinette, who had been so merciless towards Mme. du Barry, gave Emma the warmest welcome in Versailles after she had become Hamilton's wife. The two cases were very different. A feeling of personal dignity prevented the Dauphine from speaking to the mistress of Louis XV; moreover she did not wish to offend Choiseul who had negotiated her marriage with the Dauphin, and was the sworn enemy of Mme. du Barry. Besides, the favourite's husband was a low adventurer whereas, however humble Emma Lyon's origin might be, she was the legitimate wife of a British Ambassador. In foreign countries, but not in England, her marriage had wiped out the past. Thus in the year 1802, when Hamilton and his wife, together with Nelson, who had become their inseparable companion, visited the Castle of Blenheim, the Duke of Marlborough sent them refreshments, but did not appear himself. This slight was not intended for Hamilton, still less for Nelson. Evidently it was aimed solely at their companion.

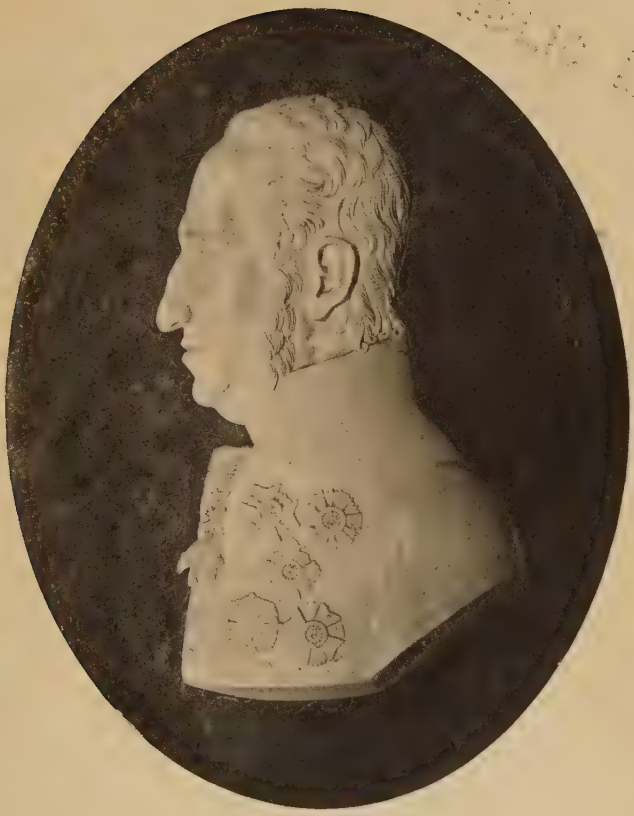
The Neapolitans were simply waiting for England to join the Coalition. In the beginning of the year 1793, after the murder of Louis XVI, the British Cabinet at length came to a decision. On July 12 of the same year, Acton, the Marchese Santo-Marcello and the Marchese Circello, representing Ferdinand IV, concluded a treaty with Hamilton, each party promising to provide the other with troops.

Thus the Neapolitan historian Colletta is mistaken when he asserts that Emma's favour sprang from the ascendency which she exercised over Lord Nelson. The real motive of the brilliant reception which she met with at the Court of Naples was a political one and existed at the time of her marriage and even before.* It existed in 1793 as it did in 1791. Considering the powerful aid she was to receive from England, Marie-Caroline did not hesitate to receive the wife of the Ambassador, and Lady Hamilton's great personal charm soon increased her favour at Court.

It will here be necessary to give a short sketch of the principal personages of the Neapolitan Court.

The appearance of King Ferdinand IV was conspicuous by the extraordinary proportions of his nose. The Neapolitans, who delight in distributing nicknames, called him irreverently *Nasone*. He had inherited this peculiar feature from his father, but in the case of Charles III the nose was well shaped, elegant and, in spite of its size, distinguished looking, whereas Ferdinand looked almost like a caricature. In character the two Kings were also totally different. Charles III had conquered his kingdom by a brilliant exploit, having taken an active part in the victory of Bitonto. He had governed wisely, accomplishing great public works and introducing useful reforms. Ferdinand, on the contrary, was an ignorant man,

* See our remarks on p. 118 etc. After her marriage, Emma wrote to Romney that she had been presented at the Queen's personal request and that Marie-Caroline had invited her to dine as soon as she arrived in Naples.



FERDINAND IV OF NAPLES

and it has even been asserted that his ministers deliberately fostered his ignorance in order to enjoy more power. Incapable and destitute of elevated sentiments, he yet possessed enough common sense to act justly on some occasions. He was a very good-natured man and made no pretence of being clever. In one respect only did he resemble his father; he was passionately fond of hunting, —the hereditary and barbarous taste of the Bourbons.

The following letter written by Marie-Caroline on January 28, 1799, just after Ferdinand had lost his kingdom and was mourning the death of one of his children, will give an idea of the King's character or, rather, of his sentiments. It is worthy of note that the Queen always spoke of him with real affection, which is rather singular if it be remembered how unfaithful they were to each other: "Religion or resignation help your dear father to bear up. He is well and contented; he has taken a pretty little country house; he spends his time building and cultivating. In the evening he goes to the theatre or to the fancy dress ball. He is gay and I admire him. Naples might be the land of Hottentots so completely has he forgotten it."*

Ferdinand willingly left the burden of State affairs to his capable wife, of whom he was fond of saying: "My wife knows everything. She is very wise." Admiral Collingwood, wishing to speak indulgently of the Neapolitan King wrote to his wife: "The King has the appearance of a country gentleman. Nature surely shaped him for that condition." General Thiébault, less well disposed towards him, relates certain stories that circulated throughout Naples and according to which he was anything but a gentleman, and a boor rather than a country

* Von Helfert, *Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 530. "Vostre cher père se porte, soit religion résignation ; or, il se porte bien et est content, il a pris une jolie maisonnette de campagne, bâtit, cultive, le soir va au theatre, bal masque est gai et je l'admire. Naples est pour lui comme les Hottentots, il n'y pense plus."—An amusing example of Marie-Caroline's extraordinary French. (Translator's note.)

squire. Regretfully he calls the King a blackguard.* Ferdinand's low tastes may account for his having been such a favourite with the Lazzaroni. Rulers often win more popularity by their vices than by their virtues. However, after the Revolution in Naples, he put his shoulder to the wheel, and to the best of his ability took up the reins of government.

Marie-Caroline of Lorraine, Queen of Naples, daughter of the Emperor Francis I and the illustrious Maria Theresa of Austria, had, on the contrary, inherited her mother's talents if not her virtues. She was born for action, and managed the King, the State, and her love intrigues with the greatest energy. Ferdinand was perfectly willing to abdicate in her favour, and this, strange to say, fulfilled the very wishes and expectations of the parents of the young Queen. When in 1768 Marie-Caroline wedded Ferdinand IV, Maria Theresa still bewailed the loss of the Two Sicilies which her father had conquered and then been forced to abandon. She longed to take possession of them once more, indirectly at least, through her daughter's marriage with this weak and incapable husband.† It had even been stipulated that, in the event of the Queen giving birth to a son, she should be entitled to sit in the Council of State. The well-known fruitfulness of the House of Habsburg justified her hope that a prince would be born to her daughter, and she relied on the young Queen's intelligence and energy to help her in getting a hold on the Kingdom. In both cases her expectations were fulfilled. Marie-Caroline had eighteen children, and from the birth of her first son

* See *Mémoires* by General Baron Thiébault, vol. ii, p. 259. These same details are quoted by Colletta. The indulgent Madame Le Brun remarks that: "Ferdinand spent most of his time at Caserta busying himself with the factories there; the work-girls forming, it is said, a sort of harem."

† Maria Theresa had been so firmly set on this match, that Marie-Caroline was the third daughter whom she affianced to Ferdinand, the two other princesses, Jeanne and Josepha, having died prematurely.

(January 6, 1775) she never ceased to rule Naples until her fatal obstinacy brought the monarchy to the very verge of destruction.

Mme. Le Brun, who painted several portraits of Queen Caroline, says: "Although she was not as beautiful as her younger sister, the Queen of France, yet she reminded me very much of her. Her face was worn,* yet it still bore traces of past beauty. Her hands and more especially her arms, were perfect in shape and colour." In her portraits Marie-Caroline has a very hard expression, and, although she was at times capable of real and deep feeling, she could be relentless and unmerciful. Her chin was powerful; her eyes restless and remarkably piercing. The general expression of her face was so masterful that it was almost masculine in its determination. In spite of these stern characteristics, that seem to exclude all womanly grace and sweetness, the Queen was essentially feminine, and her strong will and religious principles did not save her from all the frailty of her sex. True, her strength of will was nothing but pig-headedness prompted by her wish to domineer, and her piety was very much contaminated by superstition. She was certainly good-looking, judging by a portrait painted in 1789 by Angelica Kauffmann, and by another which she gave to Lady Hamilton and which recalls the features of Marie-Antoinette. Emma and other admirers, not to mention Acton, called her *the charming Queen*, and even making allowance for the indulgence it is customary to show to crowned heads, it would have been ridiculous to apply this epithet to an ugly woman. However, the fact that she was very generous and gave without counting, may have contributed to make her appear charming in the eyes of those she favoured.

Although as a wife Marie-Caroline did not imitate her mother's virtues, she always showed sincere affection towards her husband. Whether she did so in order to prevent him from suspecting her infidelity, or to make

* Mme. Le Brun saw her in 1790.

amends to him and obtain his forgiveness, is a problem of feminine psychology that is not easily solved. It seems that all women who fail like the Queen, entertain the kindest dispositions towards the husbands they deceive; indeed Balzac declares: "When a woman treats her husband with consideration there is nothing more to be said." In all circumstances, Marie-Caroline showed the greatest regard for Ferdinand. She was much alarmed when he left her during the Revolution in Naples, and to her daughter, the Empress, she thus expressed her anxiety: "All these circumstances have decided your excellent father to go there himself. He has 1400 foot and 600 horse with him. He made up his mind quite suddenly. It was all decided and put into execution in the space of twenty-four hours. You may imagine what I have suffered! We have never been so far from each other before, and separated by the sea besides."* Such a letter might have been written by a young bride brutally torn away from the man she loved. It is hard to realise that the woman who could thus tremble fondly for the welfare of her husband—she was writing to her daughter it is true—had already given herself to a dozen lovers and that, on his side, the dear husband made a mistress of every woman who accepted his advances, and even, according to Thiébault, of those who resisted him.† Moreover, the couple were on very bad terms since the Neapolitan gazettes had revealed to Ferdinand, who was then in Palermo, the scandals of his wife's private life.

With all her faults, Marie-Caroline was a most devoted mother, and the love she showed to her daughters in particular, is really touching, in spite of the awful French in which she expressed herself. "On Easter morning I ate two little morsels at your seats thinking of you. I dare to send you the childish present of two eggs."‡ "I

* Von Helfert, *Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 78.

† General Thiébault, *Mémoires*, vol. ii, p. 258 note.

‡ April 1, 1804.

have put your hair and some of Antoinette's in a locket so as to have you always near me."* After the birth of a grandchild she wrote to one of her daughters: "I wept with joy and blessed God! I am still in ecstasies! Your dear letter, your charming enquiries and attentions have increased my raptures, tenderness and joy. May God bless you! May he comfort you is the prayer of my sincere heart! May he render you happy and contented! I cannot talk of anything else, as I live and breathe only for your welfare."† Marie-Caroline was by no means unprincipled, for she rightly judged her sister-in-law, the Queen of Spain, wife of Charles IV, whose son Ferdinand had just married the Princess Antoinette of Naples—Marie-Caroline's "little Toto." "Her husband is all in all to her, but her mother-in-law is a perfect wretch; as she has neither religion, morals nor honour, I am prepared for the worst. No one would ever believe the gambling, disorder and infamous condition of her house, of which my daughter and all who have been there give me accounts."‡ Later on, however, the same evil reports were spread about concerning the Queen of Naples.

One trait in the character of the Queen is very much to her credit. It is well known that she was a bitter enemy of Napoleon who, through the agency of his police, published the worst rumours about her, with the object of paving the way for the famous decree whereby he declared that the Bourbons of Naples had ceased to reign. Yet, in spite of the violent hatred with which Napoleon inspired Marie-Caroline, she always professed the deepest admiration for his talent. Her masterful mind made her capable of appreciating the great general. It has already been stated that from the very first day of their acquaintance she became sincerely attached to Emma, in whose eyes the "adorable Queen" was clothed with every vir-

* August 13, 1805. † December 21, 1802.

‡ October 21, 1804.

tue. But the clever favourite had been well trained by her husband, for, in her letters, she often remarked: "I kept my distance."*

Besides the sovereign who shirked the burden of authority, and the Queen, who in spite of that clause in her marriage settlement, could not reign in her own right, two men of very different calibre, Acton and the Marchese Gallo, ruled the Kingdom of Naples during this period.

John Acton—in Italy he was called Giovanni—was born at Besançon, on October 1, 1737. His father was an Irish doctor established in France. Before entering the service of Naples, he had been successively in the French and Tuscan navies. His portraits represent him with wide-open astonished eyes and a foolish expression, but, in reality, he was by no means devoid of merit. He first distinguished himself during an expedition which Charles III of Spain undertook against Algiers with the help of the Neapolitans, the Maltese and the Tuscans. Acton was in command of the latter. "The allies having failed in their attempt to land forces, the Spanish fleet, composed of great heavy vessels, could not get near enough to the coast to cover the retreat of the defeated troops. The vessels commanded by Acton were of a lighter build and could sail close to the coast, so that he was able to protect the Spanish with his artillery and thus saved three or four thousand men, who would otherwise have been cut to pieces. It is easy, adds the author of this account, to gain an undeserved reputation amongst men. Acton owed his success to the fact that his ships

* Letter to Greville written on June 2, 1793. Marie-Caroline had such confidence in her friend that she even confessed to her that documents had been stolen from Mackau, the French minister, and that it had been done at her command: "I am delighted you liked Custode. He is a witty, clever and active man, but he needs to be kept in order. It was he who carried off the documents and records from Mackau's house." Concerning this violation of diplomatic rights see *Marie-Caroline, reine des Deux Siciles*, by André Bonnefons, published by Perrin, 1909.

were light; but this chance served to win him the reputation of being a great captain, and a genius capable of creating a navy."*

This harsh criticism seems to be inspired by an adverse political passion for, on this occasion, Acton certainly accomplished his duty in a brilliant manner, displaying great courage and presence of mind, and Charles III readily acknowledged his services. The Franco-Irishman changed his country once more and became director of the navy at Naples. At Court he succeeded in avoiding the numerous snares that waylaid him, and pushed his fortunes so cleverly that he became the Queen's lover, a circumstance which, however, did not deprive him of the King's favour. Successively he became Minister of Marine, Minister of Finance, and finally Prime Minister. His career was not absolutely faultless, but he bore up honourably until the end, as he remained in power until the victorious French caused his downfall.

The Marchese Gallo, who did not become Prime Minister until January 10, 1798, had not Acton's brilliant talents, but he was so supple, so insinuating and clever, that he was never out of office. He was always needed somewhere. Acton's violence and hatred of the national enemy made him all-powerful at home, but Gallo's smooth tongue was of no less importance when the possibility of having to negotiate with that same enemy had to be taken into consideration. Acton personified war, Gallo diplomacy. The one was ever ready to go ahead, the other stood to cover the retreat. Emma, the wife of the diplomatist, naturally preferred Acton, and it will be seen how harshly she judged his wily colleague. Men and women such as Acton and Emma, are exposed to great reverses; whereas clever men of Gallo's type ingratiate themselves with all parties and withstand every upheaval. After having been Ambassador in Vienna, Gallo became Prime Minister. Towards the end of the year 1798, he was

* G. M. Arrighi, *Saggio storico per sevire di studio alle revoluzioni politiche e civili dal regno di Napoli*, nella stamperia del Corriere, Napoli, 1809.

once again appointed to the Imperial Court and then sent to France. He thus succeeded in remaining in office until the reign of Murat who, in the year 1813, conferred on him the title of Duke. As a Franco-Italian, he had the direction of a department, in which the two languages were used alternatively and, according to the letter he was writing, he signed himself, *il Marchese* (or *il Duca*) *di Gallo*, or *le Marquis* (or *le Duc*) *de Gallo*.

These were the principal actors who figured in the Neapolitan comedy when, between 1791 and 1798, Emma Lyon made her début in the company. They still held their parts when the farce suddenly became deadly earnest, and a new character appeared on the scene. This personage who, like Tartuffe, came on in the third act only, was destined to spread conflagration in the history of Naples, and in the life of Lady Hamilton. Emma Lyon had been much beloved. Many had desired her and she had abandoned herself to their desire. After having been the mistress of Greville and of his uncle she had succeeded in marrying the elder and richer of her two admirers. The heroine of this sordid past, the prostitute who had become the wife of an Ambassador was, in her 35th year,* to inspire a great man with one of those wild and overwhelming passions that echo throughout the ages and, in the memory of men, associate the names of the lover and the faithless wife; Cleopatra and Anthony; Diana of Poitiers and Henry II; the Marquise du Châtelet and Voltaire; Sophie de Monnier and Mirabeau; George Sand and Alfred de Musset; Mme. de Bonnemains and General Boulanger.

Before analysing the origin of this celebrated passion the cause of Rear-Admiral Nelson's visit to Naples must be stated.

General Buonaparte, who had returned triumphant from his first campaign, had just proposed to the Government of the Directory that expedition to Egypt which has been variously regarded as a supreme stroke of genius

* According to Mrs Gamlin she was thirty-three.

and as an incipient act of madness. This point is still unsettled, but it does not enter into the object of this work to discuss the question.

The extraordinary secrecy that prevailed over the preliminaries of the expedition is almost unique in the annals of history. Six men only, the five Directors and the General, were informed of the object of these preparations. Not one of the Ministers, not one of Buonaparte's companions, had been let into the secret, and while the expedition was being discussed even the secretary of the Directory had not been admitted to the sittings. Naturally enough the wives of the Directors and Josephine Buonaparte were also kept in ignorance of the hidden plans. Indeed the mystery was so well guarded that the administrators and savants who were to join the expedition had not the vaguest idea as to their destination. The troops that were gathered together at Toulon received the name of Left Wing of the Army of England (Aile Gauche de l' armée d' Angleterre). Whatever name it pleased the French to bestow on this formidable army, Britain naturally felt some anxiety concerning these strange preparations that were being carried on in such secrecy. Admiral Jervis, Earl St. Vincent who, from the heights of Gibraltar was watching Spain, dispatched Rear-Admiral Nelson with three, and subsequently thirteen vessels to blockade Toulon and, at any cost, to prevent Buonaparte's escape.

On this mission Nelson was pursued by the most extraordinary ill-luck. He encountered fierce storms that forced him to take his battered vessels into dock at the Isles St Pierre. Buonaparte made the most of this advantage, and slipped through Nelson's fingers, sailing on 30th Florial, Year VI. (May 19, 1798). When Nelson at length reached Toulon, he found the French fleet had escaped. For the second time Fortune refused to smile on his ambition, and he had failed in his mission. Furious, he started wildly in pursuit of the vanished enemy seeking everywhere for information. But he lacked

water and supplies. The western ports of the Mediterranean were closed to him by the defection of Spain and the neutrality of the Italian States. In despair he wrote to Hamilton, asking him to obtain for his fleet admission into the Bay of Naples. The Neapolitan Government had some reason to hesitate before returning a favourable answer to the Admiral's request. They might well fear that by opening their ports to a British fleet, the French would consider that they had committed a breach of the Franco-Neapolitan treaty. They were unaware that, at this moment, the Republic wished at all costs to maintain peace. It was Lady Hamilton who was instrumental in inducing the Neapolitan Government to receive the English vessels.

"Nelson's messenger, Captain Troubridge, arrived at the Embassy at 6 o'clock in the morning. Sir William and Lady Hamilton at once arose and proceeded to the residence of the Minister, Sir John Acton, who convened a council, the King of Naples being present. While this conference was taking place Lady Hamilton sought the Queen's apartments, Her Majesty being still in bed. To her Lady Hamilton explained the position of the British fleet, and urged the Queen to write instructions in accordance with Nelson's request, for she was well aware that any command of Caroline of Naples would be more honoured than that of her feeble-minded husband. At first the royal lady was reluctant to interfere, saying that the King and his Ministers would decide in Council; but, on the earnest representations of her petitioner that dire calamity would accrue to her Kingdom should the result be a refusal, and moved by the supplicating entreaties poured forth by Lady Hamilton, who was kneeling by her bed-side, she at last consented. A pen was immediately placed in her hand, and, at the dictation of her clear-headed companion, she wrote the order, directed to all the Governors of the Two Sicilies, 'to receive with hospitality the British fleet, to water, victual and aid them.' At eight o'clock the Council broke up, and the elated

Ambassador's wife was summoned to join her husband. From the expression of the faces of the King, Sir John Acton, and Sir William, she quickly learnt that the conclave had ended in failure, and that they felt they could not break the compact with France. She said nothing while the King was present, but on the way home she told the two gentlemen that she had anticipated the result and provided against it, and to their astonishment and delight produced the important document. In communicating to Nelson the decision of the Council, Sir William Hamilton was proudly desirous that his clever wife would receive all credit for the great feat she had successfully performed; he, therefore, left it to her to forward the Queen's command; and to signify that the achievement was hers solely, and that as such it should be recognised, he added to his letter: 'You will receive from Emma herself what will do all the business and procure all your wants.' "*

It is impossible to say whether this account may be relied on. Perhaps Nelson invented it later on so that the woman he loved might enjoy the honour of having over-ruled the Neapolitan Government. Or, perhaps, the whole story was made up by Lady Hamilton, who attributed so much to her own influence and initiative. However this may be, Emma alone could know the above mentioned facts, which she inserted later on in a petition addressed to the Regent, and which seemed all the more worthy of credit, as Nelson himself referred to them in the codicil of the will made on the morning of Trafalgar.

In spite of the precision with which certain details are given, the whole account seems very improbable, and it is quite possible that Lady Hamilton persuaded her lover into believing she had played an important part. However, it is only fair to leave to Lady Hamilton the credit of having rendered this further service to her country. Mrs Gamlin gives the account of Emma's intervention, but she does not mention Nelson's visit to Naples on

* Morrison MSS. 1046.

June 20. According to her, the Admiral sailed first for Syracuse and wrote from there to Hamilton on July 23. It will be seen that during the two months preceding this date events of the utmost importance, for history in general and for Nelson and Emma in particular, had taken place.

Before we turn to these events there is one thing that calls for comment. Hamilton, the cautious and circumspect Ambassador, who treated his wife with such tender affection, cannot be counted a fastidious husband, and from this time onwards he played the part of Sganarelle. What is to be thought of a man who, when writing to an officer with whom his wife was barely acquainted, speaks of her familiarly by her Christian name? "You will receive from Emma," he wrote. These words, quoted by Emma herself, must be authentic, in as much as they confirm Hamilton's way of speaking about his wife. Other letters written by Hamilton to Nelson were in the same familiar strain. As her husband, he should have known better than to speak of her by her Christian name except when conversing with relations. The very fact that so many men had previously called his wife "Emma, my very dear Emma," should have made him refrain from using this familiar name when speaking to strangers. It is still more extraordinary that when writing to Nelson he sometimes speaks of "*our* dear Emma" (October 16, 1801). Nothing could be more explicit.*

* In the memorial which Lady Hamilton addressed to the Regent Emma says that Nelson called Aboukir "Emma's battle". This is significant.

CHAPTER V

Nelson's first meeting with Lady Hamilton—Description of Nelson—Nelson falls in love—The results of his love—The lover and the husband—Nelson's esteem and friendship for Sir William Hamilton—Correspondence—Mrs Gamlin's opinion—Nelson's letter to his wife—Lady Hamilton's first letter to Nelson—Lady Hamilton's politics—Aboukir.

NELSON'S love for Lady Hamilton was to be of such consequence to the civilised world that it is worth while to try to fix the date of its origin, and to note when it first manifested itself. This it is difficult to determine precisely, for no woman cares to publish on the house-tops or write down in her diary that on such-and-such a day she was unfaithful to her husband,* nor does the lover boast of having betrayed his friend. But there are involuntary and spontaneous manifestations of the feelings, which reveal the most carefully guarded secret. The disclosure of their casual but definite references will suffice to fix the date.

In 1793 Nelson, who was then post-captain, had been despatched to Naples by Admiral Hood to obtain troops for Toulon. As soon as he reached Naples he got into communication with Hamilton. Although, on principle, the Ambassador never offered hospitality to the officers of the fleet, he invited Nelson to stay at the Palazzo Sessa. With singular penetration he seemed to foresee the brilliant career that lay before his guest, and said to his wife: "The Captain I am about to introduce to you is a little man, and far from handsome; but he will live

* The Duchess d'Abrantès is, perhaps, the only woman who displayed such frankness. See her *Journal Intime* in *La Générale Junot, Duchesse d'Abrantès*, by J. Turquan, published by J. Tallandier.

to be a great man. Let him be put in the room prepared for Prince Augustus."*

This prophecy, which seems to prove that Hamilton was a better judge of men than of women, aroused Emma's ambition and interest in the new-comer. Since the preceding year, when, through Hamilton's illness, she had been so near becoming a widow, she had often reflected on her position. Sir William was getting on in years, and a second attack of fever in a climate so unfavourable to northerners might have a fatal issue. With a view to guarding herself against the consequences of such an untoward event, she was looking about for a possible protector. If her life be subjected to a close scrutiny, it is abundantly clear that she had thought out a very practical plan. Hamilton had not succeeded in curing her moral blemishes, and she played with all her former skill on the old man's weakness for the furtherance of her schemes. As a last resource, in the event of Hamilton's death, she had planned to make Greville marry her. All her letters breathe the spirit of a love that was not quite extinguished, that might yet burn anew, a love tender and enduring. These were her usual tactics, and from the very beginning of her adventurous career she had had recourse to them. Captain Payne's career made him an uncertain protector, who might any day have to leave her, so she found herself another, to whom to turn when she had ruined him. Payne was compliant and Featherstonehaugh had welcomed her, only to be ruined in his turn. Then she played the same game with Greville. A few years were enough to beggar him, but she had taken care to win the good graces of her lover's uncle. These clever tactics were crowned with a success beyond all her expectations, for she managed to inveigle Hamilton into marrying her.

Her whole conduct proves that Emma was incapable of any great passion but that for money. It is, therefore, impossible to suppose that she really loved Nelson. At

* Son of George III.

each new intrigue of her frivolous existence, she revealed a practical, designing nature, together with the courtesan's love of luxury and the artist's craving for applause. Her own interests came before every other consideration. Yet some have called her romantic! She was constantly haunted by the thought of what would become of her if Sir William were to die without making a will in her favour. Her husband allowed her £200 a year as pin-money, and in those days, in Italy, that sum was considered almost a fortune. Fine clothes, luxurious surroundings and extravagance had become necessaries of life to her. Her title, her position as wife of the British Ambassador, her life at Court and her friendship with the Queen had completely turned her head, and she could not forego the external marks of respect, the bowing and scraping, so dear to those who do not deserve it, and which the world generally grants to money and rank. All these considerations convinced her of the necessity of adding one more string to her bow, for to work she was ashamed, and she had no will to bury herself in the country. Her husband had told her that Nelson would reach the highest honours. Well and good! She would make Nelson hers. She would make him love her and take her as his mistress. When Hamilton died, Nelson should marry her. True, he was already married, but that mattered little to Emma. There was the Divorce Court.

Lady Hamilton was much more concerned about the perfection of her Attitudes than of her soul, and about the beauty of her person than of her feelings. Her plan matured, she bent her whole energy on conquering Nelson. She was a past-mistress in the art of coquetry. The melting glance, the blush that seemed so innocent upon her cheek, and all the armoury of seduction were hers. All her contemporaries have praised the charm of her person and the beauty of her features. Add to this the freedom of the cunning courtesan, who knows well the weak points of the place she is investing, and it will

easily be understood that she soon captivated Nelson. Sailors who have spent their youth gazing on the broad bosom of the ocean fall easier victims than other men to women's wiles. During their long cruises they live in an unreal world and have a natural tendency to clothe women with all the perfections that exist only in their dreams, and to think of love as something infinite and stupendous as the elements that surround them. All women feel these things instinctively, and Emma's experience gave her a very clear insight into the nature of the man she wished to seduce. That Nelson was not good-looking, and had never been courted by such a beautiful women, made the victory all the easier. When with queenly favour Emma, the former courtesan, made the first advances, Nelson believed them genuine. In a very short time their intimacy became so notorious that Josiah Nisbet, his stepson, "vehemently protested at a public dinner against the too profuse attentions of his step-father to Lady Hamilton, his violent conduct necessitating his removal from the table by his brother officers. His excitement was afterwards condoned on the plea of inebriety."*

In all circumstances the real and the apparent cause of an event must be distinguished. In this case we can only

* Mrs H. Gamlin, *op. cit.*, ch. xii, p. 98. The authoress adds that Nelson had made some attempts on the virtue of his hostess, and moreover that he desired every woman he met. In his work *Carteggio di Maria-Carolina*, Palumbo says that the liaison between Nelson and Lady Hamilton began in 1793, and from this moment they corresponded without interruption. However he does not substantiate his assertion. The historian Colletta believes that it was on his return from Aboukir that Nelson fell in love with Lady Hamilton. According to W. Sichel, Lady Hamilton already took an interest in Nelson in 1796, for her husband wrote to the Admiral saying; "Lady Hamilton and I admire your constancy, and hope the severe service you have undergone will be handsomely rewarded." (*Nelson's letters*, vol. ii, p. 188.) "The severe service" can only refer to a long cruise which required constancy and endurance. Fauchier-Magnan quotes a letter written by Emma before Nelson returned to Naples in 1798; "I will not tell you how glad I shall be to see you." (June 17, 1798.)

be guided by probabilities. Josiah Nisbet's indignation seems to have sprung from a variety of feelings, which it is necessary to explain. It is quite possible that Emma's free-and-easy manner and the assurance that marked her bearing had made a deep impression on the young sailor, whom she had flattered with some marks of favour and attention. When a young man attracts the notice of a well-known and beautiful woman, whose natural charm is heightened by her coquetry, the sentiment which he feels towards her is generally a livelier one than mere gratitude. Josiah Nisbet, who was a novice in such matters, had attached undue importance to the advances whereby Lady Hamilton intended to secure his neutrality and to conceal the real object of her attack. His feelings had really become more or less seriously involved, though Nelson, never thinking that this excessive amiability on the part of his hostess might be prompted by some hidden motive, simply attributed her attitude to politeness, and wrote to his wife: "Lady Hamilton has been wonderfully kind and good to Josiah. She is a young woman of amiable manners, and who does honour to the station to which she is raised."*

If Nelson could thus praise the woman whose notorious past was known to him, he must already have been under the spell of her beauty. Perhaps Nisbet also worshipped her entrancing image. In his youth and inexperience he may have imagined that the transcendently beautiful woman really cared for him, and that for him were meant the wistful glances, the soft words, the playful chatter that went straight to his heart. Thus is created often a silent passion, which may last an hour or a lifetime. In this case the outcome was Nisbet's sudden outburst at table, when the brutal truth was revealed to him and he understood he had been fooled and used as a screen to mask the siren's attack on his step-father. His violence may have been the expression of poignant grief and shat-

* Lord Nelson's *Dispatches*, vol. i, p. 326.

tered hopes, though the officers' respect for their Admiral attributed it to intoxication.

The young man was still more mortified by the knowledge that his step-father had betrayed his mother. Nisbet had saved Nelson's life at the battle of Teneriffe, when the Admiral lost his right arm. It is easy to understand the tortures endured by the young officer when the *liaison* between his step-father and Lady Hamilton was made a subject of common gossip. The upshot was that Lady Hamilton informed Nelson of all that had taken place, and he ordered the young man to embark immediately on board the *Thalia*. After this incident he was kept away from Naples, and never met his step-father again.

It is impossible to say how far matters had gone between Nelson and Lady Hamilton at this period, but when he left Naples he did not forget Emma. On May 27, 1794, he wrote to Hamilton from Bastia, adding a courteous word for Lady Hamilton: "Will you have the goodness to forward the inclosed to Mr Brand, and present my letter to Lady Hamilton." It was certainly a cold and correct message, but what else could he say when writing to the husband! He had no other means of letting Emma know that he did not forget her. If these few words prove that Nelson's thoughts were with the lovely enchantress, it would seem, on the other hand, that Emma's feelings had cooled down. Hamilton was once again in perfect health, and she found Nelson really very unattractive. There was no hurry. She could afford to wait.

Two years later the intrigue does not seem to have advanced, for Nelson merely added these few words to his letter to the Ambassador: "With my best respects to Lady Hamilton." But in 1797 a great change took place. Nelson was named Rear-Admiral and took command of the fleet. The future lay open before him.

When Emma realised that Nelson was starting on a brilliant career, her smouldering love burst into flame. The scheme she had first planned recurred to her with

still greater force, and she decided to play the comedy of passion to the end. When Nelson returned she would renew the attack, and she had now a new weapon to employ. She would tell him how she had suffered during his absence, and how she had loved him ever since the first day they met.

It was not long since Emma had written to Romney: "I am the happiest woman in the world. Sir William is fonder of me every day, and I hope will have no corse to repent of what he as done, for I feel so grateful to him that I think I shall never be able to make him amends for his goodness to me. But why do I tell you this. You was the first dear friend I open'd my heart to; you ought to know me."*

Although Emma could be so deeply designing, at other times she acted and wrote in the most thoughtless and inconsistent manner. It is hard to say whether she was always responsible for her half-cynical, half-ingenuous behaviour. Without any apparent regret, she had in turn abandoned each one of her lovers, casting them aside when she had ruined them. With Greville she had acted differently. She had once loved him. She had contemplated returning to him, as he might eventually be of use to her.

After his death Nelson was to suffer the same fate as the others. The uniform which the Admiral was wearing when he was killed had been sent to Lady Hamilton, not to Lady Nelson. This relic should have been sacred to her; but her extravagance always kept her poor, and a collector might pay highly for this old, cast-off garment. So the woman whom Nelson had loved better than his honour appeased an angry creditor by pledging the blood of Trafalgar, for the sake of which any noble woman would have shed the last drop of her own.

In the candid glance of Emma's deep blue eyes none could detect her heartlessness. Every circumstance conspired to entangle Nelson in the toils of the enchantress.

* Morrison MSS., 199.

He was just on forty, and his weakness was notorious. Women had always been his undoing. Emma came to him under conditions which made it impossible for him not to love her above all human beings, and devote himself entirely to her and for ever. In the first place, he was not good-looking, and could scarcely expect to make great feminine conquests. He was "a plain little man," and if in youth his appearance had been attractive, he had now the peasant's vulgar and cunning expression. His origin was modest, and his father, who was Vicar of Burnham Thorpe, where Nelson passed most of his life, owed his living to a fortunate connection with the Walpoles. The future admiral was the god-son of Horace Walpole. When looking at Nelson's portraits it is hard to believe that he was the man who seemed to have sworn Hannibal's oath against the French, who destroyed their fleet and was, perhaps, the prime cause of Napoleon's downfall; the hero who, by his glorious death in the midst of victory, won for himself a twofold immortality. In the midst of his success, Nelson always displayed the tastes of a parvenu. He loved to be in full uniform and to cover his breast with the numerous insignia bestowed on him by the different sovereigns of Europe, but withal he remained simple and unconstrained in manner. In this curious temperament this weakness was in no way incompatible with qualities of the first order.* Three deep furrows running length-wise marked the face that was otherwise almost expressionless. In his appearance there was nothing of Condé's lofty dignity, nothing of the perfect outline of Buonaparte's features. If anything, he resembled the celebrated *condottiere* Walstein. A certain cold brutality was the only expres-

* Nelson had another weakness. Like Emma, he was very superstitious. "They each believed in omens. Before the battle of the Nile, a white bird had perched in his cabin. He and Emma marked the same white bird when the King was restored in the following July ; and Nelson always declared he saw it again before Copenhagen, though it was missed at Trafalgar. It was his herald of victory." (Walter Sichel, *op. cit.*, p. 242.)

J. Hoppner pinxt. *T. Woolnoth sculpt.*

HORATIO, VISCOUNT NELSON

sion that shone on his smooth countenance. He was a good but undisciplined sailor. Although a dutiful son and a loving father, he was not a good man. The celebrated admiral may have owed his victories to this very brutality and to the audacity with which, more than any other commanding officer, he exposed himself to danger. He received many wounds and was killed in a victorious battle, but he had always shown the greatest contempt for danger, of which he seemed almost unconscious. He was the son of a clergyman and inherited his father's faith,* and believed himself to be protected by God.†

Although passionate, Nelson was far from being a Don Juan, and, in spite of the attraction of women for him, his conquests in this line had not been distinguished. This it was that drew him towards Emma and that inspired him, who had hitherto only known desire, with a deep and lasting passion for her.‡

Finally, one more consideration of a most intimate

* Dr Scott, chaplain on board the *Victory*, relates that Nelson never went to bed without kneeling down to say his prayers. On the morning of October 21, a lieutenant presented himself at Nelson's cabin door and found his Lordship on his knees writing a prayer. (Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 519.)

† In March 1801, on the eve of attacking Copenhagen, he wrote to Emma: "And that Almighty Providence, who has hitherto protected me in all dangers, and covered my head in the day of battle, still, if it be His pleasure, support and assist me." (*Dispatches*, vol. iv, p. 291.) His trust in Providence had increased because in the course of his perilous career he had lost but one eye and one arm.

‡ During the interminable festivities that were given in Naples after Nelson's return from Aboukir Bay, his superior, Lord St Vincent, wrote with contemptuous irony to Lady Hamilton, whom he knew to be Nelson's mistress: "Pray, do not let your fascinating Neapolitan dames approach too near him, for he is made of flesh and blood, and cannot resist their temptations." (*Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 219.) This simple sentence, by which Earl St Vincent taunted Emma cruelly, is enough to overthrow all the arguments by means of which Mrs Gamlin endeavours to prove that Nelson never became Lady Hamilton's lover. Her chief argument is that it was impossible with such a God-fearing man as Nelson was,

nature was to draw him towards this woman. It is a subject that must be treated with the utmost delicacy.

Nelson had just lost his right arm. The soldier may glory in such a wound, but, no matter what glorious feat may have caused this loss, the mere man—the physical, sensible, material man—must in his relations with women necessarily feel himself disgraced. Nelson had a wife, but their souls were not in sympathy, and, moreover, she was far away. Suddenly, his condition was relieved by a woman who was willing to take pity on him. She was not altogether virtuous, that he knew, for the rumour of her notorious past had reached even the sailor on distant seas. Still, since her marriage she had so far recovered her good name that she was admitted into society and to the close companionship of a queen.

It was hard to resist her. Her transcendent beauty was enhanced by artistic tastes, real or assumed, and she had talent enough to make men credit her with a superiority that she did not possess. During long cruises Nelson had been deprived of all feminine society, consequently his ardent nature was stirred to its inmost depths by her alluring advances. The violence of his emotions perturbed him all the more as he had then the strictest principles on the subject of the marriage vows. Indeed, it required all the courtesan's skill and audacity to lure him away from his allegiance and silence the voice of conscience. It was only after long trouble that she triumphed. It was only after violent struggles with himself that Nelson surrendered to her and gave himself to her for ever, but when the final step was taken he gave way to his feelings with the completeness and whole-heartedness that often characterise a sailor's actions. More than one thing drew him towards Emma. The education of both had been neglected, the manners and language of both—and of Emma especially—were vulgar, so that neither would embarrass the other. Their deficiencies, rather than their qualities, drew them together and united them. For this reason Emma accepted the very sincere love

which Nelson gave her, though there was little he could offer her with it. There can be no doubt as to the depth of an affection that could dictate the letter in which Nelson told her that, if she broke her nose, everybody else would desert her, but that he would never desert her, for he loved her for the goodness of her heart.

It is difficult to say whether at this period he had already responded to her advances, or whether he was still in that state of delicious torpor when the serpent of the Bible suddenly glides forth. Perhaps, so far, he had merely felt himself drawn towards the fatal passion that was to dishonour him. The following letter written by him to the First Lord of the Admiralty on October 4 is scarcely worded as an official despatch should be: "We all dine this day with the King on board a Ship. . . . I am writing opposite Lady Hamilton, therefore you will not be surprised at the glorious jumble of this letter. Were your Lordship in my place, I much doubt if you would write so well; our hearts and our hands must be all in a flutter: Naples is a dangerous place, and we must keep clear of it."*

A whirlwind of passion runs through these lines, that seem to be a half-veiled confession that Nelson feared becoming involved in an adventure, the consequences of which, when considered in moments of composure, made him tremble. This letter was written after the Battle of the Nile, but much had happened before that.

On June 17, 1798, the British fleet had been signalled off the Bay of Naples. A vessel had been detached and came to anchor in sight of the town. Immediately Lady Hamilton scribbled a letter to Nelson.

My Dear Admiral,

I write in a hurry as Capt. T. Carrol stays a moment. God bless you, and send you victorious, and that I may see you bring back buonaparte with you. Pray send Cap. Hardy out to us for I shall have a

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 144.

fever with anxiety, the Queen desires me to say everything thats kind, and bids me say with her whole heart and soul she wishes you victory. God bless you, my dear Sir. I will not say how glad I shall be to see you. Indeed I cannot describe to you my feelings on you being so near us.

Ever, ever, dear Sir,
Your obliged and grateful
EMMA HAMILTON.*

Some of these words are very significant and betray her passion: "for I shall have a fever with anxiety" . . . "I will not say how glad I shall be to see you. Indeed I cannot describe my feelings on you being so near us" . . . "Ever, ever, dear Sir . . ." The intimacy and tenderness of her words make it impossible to suppose that Nelson and Lady Hamilton were still on terms of mere courtesy or even of friendship. Besides, what object had she in writing to him, when she had no particular news to give him? Why should she write "your obliged and grateful"? This letter can only be interpreted as the expression of passion—real or counterfeit—for Nelson, and of a no less ardent feeling of patriotism, when she hopes that Nelson will bring back Buonaparte a prisoner.

It was almost immediately followed by another note.

DEAR SIR,

I send you a letter I have received this moment from the Queen. *Kiss it*, and send it me back by Bowen, as I am bound not to give any of her letters

Ever your
EMMA.†

In a much calmer strain Nelson replied on the same day, but inadvertently he dated his letter May 17 instead of June 17.

* Add. MSS. 34,989, f. 1. † Add. MSS. 34,989, f. 3.

My dear Lady Hamilton,

I have kissed the Queen's letter pray say I hope for the honor of kissing her hand when no fears will intervene, assure her Majesty that no person has her felicity more at heart than myself, and that the sufferings of her family will be a Tower of Strength on the day of Battle, fear not the event, God is with us, God bless you and Sir William pray say I cannot stay to answer his letter.

Ever your's faithfully

Horatio Nelson.*

The following charming note was written from Syracuse on June 17:

My dear friends,

Thanks to your exertions, we have victualled and watered; and surely watering at the fountain of Arethusa we must have victory. We shall sail with the breeze, and be assured I will return either crowned with laurel or covered with cypress.†

From these letters it may be gathered that, if Emma contributed so much to the victualling and watering of Nelson's fleet, she was actuated by a certain amount of patriotism, but principally by the interested love she was beginning to foster. In his last will Nelson attributes all the merit to her intervention. Whatever the truth may be, it is certain that Nelson remained in Syracuse, not on account of Lady Hamilton but for want of a favourable breeze, and General Buonaparte's fleet was able to cross the Mediterranean without opposition simply because the enemy's vessels were wind-bound off the coast of Sicily. At length, however, the longed-for breeze arose, and Nelson was able to set sail. On July 22 he wrote to Sir William from Syracuse, but sent no message

* Egerton MSS., 1614, f. 1.

† Pettigrew, vol. ii, p. 616. Harrison, vol. i, p. 256. Mr Walter Sichel thinks this letter was written on July 22.

to the Ambassador's wife, as he was writing to her on the same day. An air of secrecy pervades this letter, not that the writer had any mysterious information to give her, but simply because of the secret that lay between them. This the letter confirms. Courtesy it displays, but not a trace of affection, still less of love.

My dear Madam,

I am so hurt at the treatment we received from the power we came to assist and fight for, that I am hardly in a situation to write a letter to an elegant body; therefore you must on this occasion, forgive my want of those attentions which I am ever anxious to show you. *I wish to know your and Sir William's plans for coming down the Mediterranean*, for if we are to be kicked at every port of the Sicilian dominions, the sooner we are gone the better. Good God! how sensibly I feel our treatment, I have only to pray that I may find the French and throw all my vengeance on them.*

Nelson seems to have written in this cold, formal strain in order that Lady Hamilton might be able to show the letter to her husband and to the Queen, trusting the latter would thus be brought to give orders that would secure a better reception for the British fleet. It is also possible that by these lines he simply meant to convey his compliments to the hostess with whom he had formed a fleeting connection, to which he attached no more importance than to a dinner or any other civility. It had been an agreeable incident, and nothing more. Perhaps, after all, the "God-fearing man" was anxious to commit to oblivion an adventure which weighed on his conscience when he thought of the coming meeting with Lady Nelson. It was only later on that this passing fancy became a deep passion, when after Aboukir, in the intoxicating atmosphere of triumph and adulation, he succumbed to a renewed and public attack

* Morrison MSS., 325.

on the part of Lady Hamilton. Still later on, as a delicate tribute to his mistress, he deliberately persuaded himself, and made her believe, that her love had helped him to the victory of the Nile, which he fondly called "Emma's battle." Who knows indeed whether, in that solemn and decisive moment, the haunting beauty of Lady Hamilton and his passion for her, quickening all his faculties, filling him with signal daring, may not have suggested to him the audacious manœuvre by means of which he caught the French fleet between two fires?

Lady Hamilton never lost sight of her plans for the future, and when she saw that her husband's prophecy concerning this plain, little, one-armed officer was coming true, she prosecuted with renewed energy her campaign against the victorious hero. She overwhelmed him with flattery and caresses; she intoxicated him with her praise and beauty. Nelson once more forgot that he was a married man and this time heart as well as senses responded to her charms. The woman's subtle wiles had vanquished the conqueror, and Emma became henceforth the centre of Nelson's life.

So Lady Hamilton was the unconscious cause of Nelson's victory at Aboukir, just as, in 1799, by retaining Nelson in Palermo, she was the unconscious cause of Buonaparte's safe return to Fréjus. Then, as it often if not always happens, momentous consequences resulted from absurdly small causes. To Emma England is indebted for the victory of Aboukir, since it was she who persuaded the Queen Marie-Caroline to allow the British fleet to get water and provisions in Sicily, thus rendering the encounter possible, and it was the love with which she inspired Nelson that, in the hour of battle, wrought his faculties up to the highest pitch of intensity.

At a first glance the letters exchanged between Lady Hamilton and Nelson at this period do not betray any undue intimacy. In the beginning of their correspondence Nelson addressed her as *My dear Madam* (October 24, 1798), *My dear Lady Hamilton*, and con-

tinued using these correct terms until July 31, 1801, when, for the first time, appears the appellation *My dearest Emma.* Lady Hamilton, on her side, addressed him as *Dear Sir* (June 30, 1798). Their letters are full of naive tenderness such as might be expressed by young people who are unconscious of their real feelings, but, in spite of this appearance of innocence, they are significant to those who know the intricacies of human passion. The very existence of this correspondence is in itself a proof of their intimacy. Lovers are essentially clever at contrivances, and find a thousand means to understand each other whilst they appear to say nothing. They could not resist the pleasure of corresponding with each other on the most trivial subjects, but Sir William had to be kept in ignorance of their sentiments. No romance ever thrived without its interchange of letters. Guilty lovers find a relish in the need of secrecy and the dangers it entails. This the two lovers realised, but took good care that in their correspondence no compromising word escaped them which might betray their secret, should a letter fall into the hands of Sir William. They were careful also to avoid mentioning the names of important personages, for in those troubled times it was easy for a letter to miscarry. These precautions necessitated the use of a conventional tone and language, which concealed confidences, the detail of which sometimes escapes the reader, but the general tenor of which it is easy to detect. The French *émigrés* corresponded with their friends in France by means of an enigmatical language, which became familiar to them and which they used continually. Like many another lover, Lady Hamilton had recourse to the same expedients. She and Nelson agreed upon a certain language which they alone could understand. Such women as Emma have a special gift for this mysterious sort of correspondence, which gives full scope to their duplicity and cunning.

Thus, Nelson's letter of May 12, 1799, is not by any means as innocent as it appears on the surface.

My dear Lady Hamilton,

Accept my sincere thanks for your kind letter. Nobody writes so well: therefore pray, say not you write ill; for, if you do, I will say—what your goodness sometimes told me: "You l—e!" I can read, and perfectly understand, every word you write. We drank your and Sir William's health. . . .*

The words "I can read and perfectly understand every word you write," following on his comment on Emma's style, are sufficient proof that an enigmatical language agreed upon by the two lovers had been employed for the first time by Emma, and that Nelson had been able to decipher it, and begged her to continue corresponding in this way. He would be able to understand all she wrote. "Nobody writes so well." As for Sir William's name, it was simply brought in as a blind, under cover of which he could correspond with Emma.

May 19, 1799.

My dear Lady Hamilton,

You, and good Sir William, have spoilt me for any place but with you. I love Mrs Cadogan. You cannot conceive what I feel, when I call you all to my remembrance, even to Mira, do not forget your faithful and affectionate,

Nelson.†

Here again "good Sir William" is introduced as a safeguard, in the event of the letter falling into the wrong hands. As for Mrs Cadogan, Nelson must indeed have been very deeply in love to include her amongst his dearest affections. It is a proof that his passion was as deep as it was sincere. All who have loved will recognise the symptoms. Even Mira had a place in his fervent heart. As Molière says:

"*Jusqu' au chien du logis il s'efforce de plaire.*"

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 7.

† *Idem*, vol. i, p. 10.

It was not that Nelson was seeking to win Mira's good graces. He only mentions her because, being in love with Emma, the overflow of his affections poured itself out on to all those who surrounded her, on her mother, her dog, and even her husband. His condition was very natural and human.

Nelson's letters were published in 1814, during Lady Hamilton's life-time, by Harrison, to whom she had entrusted them in view of a publication of a Life of Nelson, and who stole them from her. Evidently she had only shown the least compromising epistles, for at the time she was constantly soliciting a pension, or at least some help, which the Government refused to grant her on account of her notorious connection with Nelson, and she was bound to conceal that absolute proof of her dishonour, the secret of Horatia's birth.* To Mr Rose she wrote that a kind friend had told her that her petitions were rejected on account of the infamous reports circulated against her honour and that of Nelson, the falseness of which she would prove. Thus it would be useless to seek for the truth in this correspondence, but, as it has been seen, by submitting it to close scrutiny, and by reading between the lines, we can perhaps get upon its track.

In the first place, they started corresponding during Nelson's cruise in June 1798. Henceforward his remarks concerning the war, politics, and the fleet were addressed not only to the British Ambassador, but also to the latter's wife. It may be wondered what prompted him to include her in his correspondence on State affairs. Hamilton was by no means a fool, and, however clever his wife might be, the old diplomatist was better informed than she concerning State secrets, statesmen, and the best way of approaching them. Consequently, when wishing

* The fact that she went on keeping open house after Nelson's death, did her, no doubt, much harm, as it proved that she was not inconsolable, and that she had simply fooled Nelson into believing she loved him. But the British Government was not to be so easily duped.

to have his views adopted, it would have been far more consistent had Nelson addressed himself solely and directly to the man who represented his country. But he was so entirely taken up with Emma that he dedicated to her not only his thoughts, but even his letters. This was far more to his taste, and he knew Emma was clever enough to make her elderly husband content with this arrangement, for he was so deeply enamoured of her himself that at her bidding he would agree to anything. Nelson always called him "good Sir William," and this epithet fits his personality. This complaisant husband was indeed good!* From all eternity he had been destined to shield the lovers by his blind benevolence. This complaisance and extreme simplicity on the part of a man who was neither ridiculous nor contemptible, placed the three actors of this comedy in a position exceptional and almost unique in the annals of celebrated intrigues. Generally in such a case the husband disappears. Either he is put out of the way by force, as in the case of the Marquis de Montespan whom Louis XIV exiled from Court, or by a still more radical measure, as when the troublesome husband is killed by the wife or the lover, or he withdraws of his own accord, as did M. Dudevant, rather than screen his wife's disgrace. In the present case, however, the husband who was thus easily deceived was of such a noble, loyal and genial disposition that the two lovers overwhelmed him with kind attentions and the tokens of an affection which appears to have been sincere. They were proud that he was their friend. They deceived him, and yet they loved him. Emma summed up the situation by these words: "One heart in three bodies." On her part it may simply have been another Attitude, but this was certainly not the case with Nelson, who spoke in affectionate terms of Sir William and sincerely lamented his death.

* "Ce bon et rebon Baciocchi" was the delightful expression which Lucien Buonaparte applied to his brother-in-law Baciocchi, the no less complaisant husband of his sister Elisa. This epithet might very well be applied to Hamilton.

Nelson generously attributed his own sentiments to Emma, or else he judged it necessary to make this platonic concession to the law of worldly decorum. He saw two separate men in Hamilton. There was the husband whom he deceived, and the betrayal of whom filled him, no doubt, with remorse. There was the loyal and trusty friend, who had never failed him. It was Hamilton's loyal disposition that made Nelson consider him so superior to himself. Referring to the Ambassador's death, he wrote to the Duke of Clarence: "My dear Friend, Sir William Hamilton died this morning; the world never lost a more upright and accomplished gentleman."*

It was only fair that he should be the champion of the man whom he had robbed of his wife. That much he owed him. But Nelson took his self-imposed mission so much to heart that he would gladly have sung the praises of the dead man before the whole world. Hamilton's name was ever on his lips. If, from the mention of the husband in Nelson's first letters to Emma, it be concluded that at the time there had been no lapse, what must be said of some of the later letters, and of this one in particular: "My dear Emma! dearest, best, friend of Nelson. Sir William is arrived, and well, remember me kindly to him."†

His love for Emma was so great that it embraced not only her mother, but her husband. Nelson treated Hamilton as a brother-in-law, whose devoted friend he had become. He displayed the same simplicity in every circumstance connected with his love. It was a sort of unconscious shamelessness which to some extent exonerates him. Throughout his passion he constantly behaved like an enraptured youth, ignorant, forgetful, or disdainful of the laws of society and good breeding. He even infected the prudent Hamilton, Emma's other lover, who, in spite of his sixty years, had still the ardour

* *Dispatches*, vol. v, p. 57.

† *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 53.

of youth. He called his wife by her Christian name when speaking to Nelson, and cried: "A fig for society!" when he decided to give hospitality to the hero, who had then separated from Lady Nelson. "A fig for them all," cried Nelson in his turn, when Emma had become a widow, and he repeatedly assured her that he would make her Duchess of Brontë (October 18, 1803). Having lost all sense of duty, they also lost sight of realities. In Nelson's eyes Emma was necessarily an angel. All women appear in this character to the men who have become their prey, until the moment when the halo and the wings fall away and reveal the vulture's bare head. The term "angel" often appears in Nelson's letters. He was not conscious that Mrs Lutwidge was making fun of him when she told him that he would soon dine with an angel, "for," he wrote to Emma, "she was sure you was one. In short, she adores you; but who does not? You are so good, so kind, to everybody; old, young, rich or poor, it is the same thing."* (October 16, 1801).

However, the husband could not be admitted into all their secrets, and it seems that, independently of the enigmatical language they had agreed upon and the Thomson letters, Nelson and Emma exchanged a double correspondence. The one was official and could be placed before her husband's eyes; the other passed straight into Emma's hands. This was, of course, highly imprudent, for during war a letter might easily have fallen into the hands of the enemy. But a guilty love always entails desperate measures. Were it not for this supposition, it would be impossible to account for the following undated letters, written at the same period, during the expedition to Copenhagen.

The first was to be shown to Sir William, and the lovers had agreed that, in the interest of their own safety, his name was always to figure in their correspondence. The second letter was strictly private, as were those to which it referred.

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 77.

The first letter was as follows:

The Saint George will stamp an additional ray of glory to England's fame, if Nelson survives. . . . Keep me alive, in your and Sir William's remembrance. My last thoughts will be with you both, for you love and esteem me. I judge your hearts by my own. May the Great God of Heaven protect you and him, is the fervent prayer of your and Sir William's unalterable friend, till death.

The second letter ran thus:

Friday Night.

My truly dearest Friend,

. . . I have read all, all your kind and affectionate letters: and have read them frequently over: and committed them to the flames, much against my inclination. . . I charge my only friend to keep well and to think of her Nelson's glory.*

For ever, ever, yours,

only yours.†

Hamilton is not mentioned in this second and very mysterious letter, written in reply to others that Nelson had been obliged to burn. There is also a strange difference in the expressions used. In the first letter Nelson writes: "My last thoughts will be with you both," but winds up the second letter with these words: "Yours, only yours."

This letter is almost a unique specimen of its kind in the correspondence published in 1814. Possibly Emma destroyed the others and kept this one inadvertently. Needless to say, Mrs Gamlin refuses to admit any guilty relations between Emma and Nelson.

* He was to reap more glory than a man could bear, since he was to fall under its burden, nor had he chosen a worthy guardian of his fame. It will be remembered that his "only friend" sold his Admiral's uniform, with its embroidery of gold and blood, the blood shed at Trafalgar.

† *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 32-34.

For the year 1798 she brings forward an argument, which is of course a very poor one, drawn from Miss Cornelia Knight's *Autobiography*. This lady, who became lady-in-waiting to Princess Charlotte, was then in Naples, acting as secretary to Lady Hamilton.* "The attentions paid to Lord Nelson appeared perfectly natural. He always spoke of his wife with the greatest affection and respect, and I remember that shortly after the Battle of the Nile, when my mother said to him that no doubt he considered the day of that victory as the happiest of his life, he answered: 'No, the happiest was that on which I married Lady Nelson.'" A very natural answer to give to a woman.

It could not be expected that Nelson would confess to his wife his passion for Lady Hamilton. The following letter, dated December 11, 1798, will show how he wrote to her about the Ambassador's wife: "What can I say of hers and Sir William's attention to me, they are, in fact, with the exception of you and my good father, the dearest friends I have in this world. I live as Sir William's son in the house, and my glory is as dear to them as their own; in short, I am under such obligations, as I can never repay but with my eternal gratitude."†

* Whilst in Naples she composed a poem, and Hamilton asked Acton to have it published. "I enclose Miss Knight's elegant poem. If your Excellency woud allow its being printed at the King's office the Admiral woud be much pleased. Miss Knight, who lives at the Crocelle, will correct the press." (September 26, 1798) From an unpublished letter in the National Archives at Naples.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 195. Nelson could not refrain from mentioning Emma's name to his wife, and this is ample proof of their intimacy. As early as September 25 he wrote: "I hope some day to have the pleasure of introducing you to Lady Hamilton, she is one of the very best women in this world; she is an honour to her sex. Her kindness, with Sir William's, to me, is more than I can express: I am in their house. . . . Lady Hamilton intends writing to you." On September 28: "Good Lady H. preserves all the papers as the highest treat for you." On October 1-6: "My pride is being your husband, the son of my dear father, and in having Sir William and Lady Hamilton for my friends." (*Dispatches*, vol. iii, pp. 130-135, 139.)

This last letter is not so innocent as it at first appears. It has a hidden meaning which deserves to be noted. Nelson announces that he does not intend leaving Naples before the end of May, and that he has not determined to leave it even then. "The poor Queen has again made me promise not to quit her or her Family, until brighter prospects appear than do at present. The King is with the Army, and she is sole Regent; she is, in fact, a great King."*

No doubt, at this moment, events had taken a bad turn for the Court of Naples. Championnet's success had just obliged Ferdinand IV to abandon Rome, where he had only maintained his position for seventeen days; therefore the Queen urged Nelson to stay on with his fleet. How well these events served the passion that had just sprung up in Nelson's heart, causing it to beat like that of a boy of fifteen!

On leaving the Paradise of Naples, where his heart remained, Nelson wrote at once to the enchantress, who had so successfully baited him, and she replied on June 30. Nelson's letter has not come down to us. Possibly it was too tender and significant to be kept, but Emma's reply still exists. It proves, as it has already been stated, that he had spoken to her about all his preoccupations.

Part of Nelson's letter had been read to the Queen, and perhaps this circumstance was turned into a pretext to make "good Sir William" understand that henceforth the political correspondence would be carried on between Nelson and his wife, as well as with himself.

Naples, June 30th, 1798.

Dear Sir,

I take the opportunity of Captain Hope, to write a few lines to you, for your kind letter by Captain Bowen.

The Queen was much pleased, as I translated it for her: and charges me to thank you; and says, she prays for

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 194.

your honour and safety—victory she is sure you will have.

We have still the regicide minister here, *Garrat;* the most impudent, insolent dog; making the most infamous demands every day; and I see plainly, the court of Naples must declare war, if they mean to save their country.

Her *Majesty* sees, and feels, all you said in your letter to Sir William, dated off the Faro di Messina, in its true light; so does General Acton.

But, alas! their First Minister *Gallo*, a frivolous, ignorant, self conceited coxcomb, that thinks of nothing but his fine embroidered coat, ring and snuff-box; and half Naples thinks him half a Frenchman: and, God knows, if one may judge of what he did in making the peace for the Emperor,* he must either be very ignorant, or not attached to his masters or the *cause commune*.

The Queen and Acton cannot bear him, and consequently (he) cannot have much power; but, still, a First Minister, although he may be a minister of smoke, yet he has always something; enough, at least, to do mischief.

The Jacobins have all been lately declared innocent, after suffering four years' imprisonment; and, I know they all deserved to be hanged long ago; and, since Garrat has been here, and through his insolent letters to Gallo, these pretty gentlemen, that had planned the death of their Majesties, are to be let out on society again.†

In short, I am afraid, all is lost here; and I am grieved to the heart for our dear, charming Queen, who deserves a better fate. I write to you, my dear Sir, in confidence, and in a hurry.

I hope you will not quit the Mediterannean without

* It is well known that the Marchese Gallo had acted as intermediary for the Austrians in their negotiations with General Buonaparte in 1797. The object of his being appointed Prime Minister in the place of Acton was to offer some satisfaction to the French Government.

† According to M. A. Bonnefons, the whole accusation fell to pieces, and Gallo was obliged to acknowledge the inanity of the proofs. *Op. cit.*, ch. iv.

taking *us*. We have our leave, and everything is ready, at a day's notice to go: but yet, I trust in God, and you, that we shall destroy those monsters, before we go from hence. Surely, their reign cannot last long.

If you have any opportunity, write to us; pray do: you do not know how your letters comfort us.

God bless you, my dear, dear Sir; and believe me, ever, your most sincerely obliged and attached friend

EMMA HAMILTON.*

Emma reveals herself in this letter. The touch of mysticism will be noted. It is something new, and she must have caught it from her connection with the vicar's son, for her past life had not directed her thoughts towards religious ideas. In her new-born fervour she called on the God who has said *Vindicta Mihi* to favour the most sanguinary plans of revenge. Above all, her soul breathed hatred of the French, the Republicans, the Liberals, the Jacobins. In those days it was quite natural that an Englishwoman should entertain bitter feelings towards France. On the other hand, if it be remembered that Britain had praised the first outburst of the French Revolution, and later on, offered lavish hospitality to its victims, the *émigrés*, it becomes evident that Emma's violent animosity must have been fostered by Nelson's fanatical hatred of all Papists. Various other reasons account for the strange aversion this daughter of the populace professed for all liberal ideas. Setting aside Nelson's influence, two considerations added singular vigour to Emma's hatred. In the first place, like all parvenues, she believed that she owed it to her new dignity and title to be more uncompromising in her principles, and more zealous, than those who are born in social elevation. She was trying to outking the King. Moreover, in the exalted position to which she had been raised, this upstart had become the friend of a Queen, and this precious connection, which she had bought at the

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, p. 181.

DETAIL FROM A PICTURE OF THE ROYAL HUNT
Lady Hamilton is the second figure from the left

price of great efforts, as well as the base promptings of a courtier's soul, inclined her to see "monsters" in all who did not share the servile love she now professed for royalty.

Nelson and the Neapolitan sovereigns, it must be remembered, also professed these extreme opinions, and this accounts for Emma having adopted them. She made her choice at the very moment when the Genevese, Mallet-du-Pan, remarked that extreme views are the last resource of those who are incapable of embracing more than one idea at a time! Was not this the case with Emma and her friends? The former courtesan felt an instinctive repugnance for all ideas that called on nations to govern by sound principles, uprooting, in as far as it is possible, all causes of corruption, and dispensing with incapable princes, whose power should be given to worthy and virtuous men, without consideration of rank or birth. No doubt, in practice, this principle was forgotten or distorted, and became a vain inscription on the pediment of the Temple of the Republic, for Viscount Paul de Barras was one of the leaders in France, and, since the beginning of the Revolution, Europe had seen enough of the French to know that many of them paid their devotions more willingly to Venus than to Minerva. But, as a body, the *Constituants* and the *Conventionnels*, proved themselves worthy, and Robespierre deserved his name "the Incorruptible." Such facts repelled Emma. Was she, the wife of an Ambassador, virtuous? Was Queen Caroline virtuous? Did Acton and Ferdinand understand the meaning of Fraternity? They did not. Absolute power on the one hand, absolute respect and obedience on the other, these were the very foundations of society. It has been seen how Emma succeeded in escaping from her own humble sphere, and curried favour with the great. Nevertheless, she exacted as much respect as though she had been born in the purple, and was unmerciful towards all who interfered with her enjoyment of grandeur.

It will be objected that in the above letter the political

woman is evident, but there is no sign of the passionate mistress. However, independently of Nelson's influence on her way of thinking, it must be remembered that the whole import of a woman's letter is contained in the last words; and these, in the present case, were: "God bless you, my dear, dear Sir, and believe me ever, your most sincerely obliged and attached friend, Emma Hamilton."

The repetition of the term of endearment is a confession in itself. Would any woman write in this way to a man with whom she was barely acquainted unless she had already given him some rights over her! It is not likely, either, that, in spite of all her impudence, Emma would have used this significant expression had she been writing before Sir William. By affecting a cold, formal style, the artful young woman wished to make her friend understand the tone and manner he was henceforth to adopt, and from which he was not to stray. At the same time she wanted to tell Nelson, if only by one word, that she still belonged to him entirely, and that his absence had not altered her feelings. The loving message was effectively conveyed by one word "My dear, dear . . ."

For this reason it may be safely concluded that June 20, 1798, or one of the following days, witnessed the beginning of this celebrated intrigue.* If, on June 30 the hero and Lady Hamilton had not already become lovers, Emma, at least, intimated that as soon as circumstances would allow it, she was willing to abandon herself to him. The Admiral should only return and she would fall on his breast, since she could not say that she would fall into his arms. Nelson being a sailor, and Emma an

* M. Fauchier-Magnan says that Nelson arrived in Naples on June 16, and bases his assertion on a letter which Emma wrote to Nelson on June 17. It appears to us that M. Fauchier-Magnan is mistaken. This letter was written concerning Captain Troubridge who arrived before Nelson, and is the one referred to by Hamilton, in this singular sentence: "You will receive from Emma. . . ." It is a short note beginning thus: "My dear Admiral,—I write in a hurry as Captain T. Carrol stays a moment. God bless you, and send you victorious, and that I may see you bring back Buonaparte with you—" etc.

expert in love affairs, it was not likely that they would let the matter flag.

And, in reality, their ardour suffered no check. According to Thiers, before leaving for Aboukir Nelson returned once more to Naples, but it is impossible to say how many hours or days he spent there. This rapid visit has left no trace in the Admiral's correspondence or in Memoirs of the time. He had not a moment to spare. No matter how great his love, he would never have sacrificed his duty to it. This sentiment often occurs in his letters.*

Nelson was, at this moment, in great straits and sorely perplexed. He had been instructed to be on the look out for Buonaparte, and to discover the destination of the mysterious expedition, the secret of which had been so carefully guarded. Not only had the General slipped through his fingers at Toulon and taken Malta, but since his departure from the island, Nelson had been giving chase in vain across the seas, in the Archipelago, the Adriatic and round Sicily. In the face of such uncertainty, even Emma could not dream of detaining the exasperated Admiral. Moreover, she was too clever to attempt such a thing. In the first place she was well aware that she would not prevail, and then the glory of her hero, and, consequently her own future, depended on these momentous days.

At length, Nelson received trustworthy information. Buonaparte was in Egypt. He had landed at Alexandria. The energetic Englishman immediately started off in pursuit, and, like Caesar, he came, saw, and conquered. The French fleet was entirely destroyed in Aboukir Bay on August 1 and 2, 1798 (14th and 15th Thermidor, year VI).

* Particularly in this one written on August 18, 1801. "You ask me, my dear Friend, if I am going on any more Expeditions? And, even if I was to forfeit your friendship, which is dearer to me than all the world, I can tell you nothing. For, I go out; (if) I see the Enemy, and can get at them, it is my duty: and you would naturally hate me, if I kept back one moment." *Dispatches*, vol. iv, p. 473.

CHAPTER VI

Rejoicings of the Court of Naples at the news of Aboukir—Nelson's demands—Protests of the French Minister—Nelson's return to Naples—His triumph.

IT was natural that the news of Nelson's victory should be greeted with joy alike by the secret and the acknowledged enemies of France, and the Court of Naples, headed by the sister of Marie-Antoinette, necessarily counted among the latter. The enthusiasm of the Royal family went far beyond anything that could be expected, and whilst sharing their sentiments, Lady Hamilton still retained enough common sense to laugh at the exaggeration they indulged in: "How shall I describe to you the transports of Maria Carolina tis not possible she fainted, cried, kiss'd her husband, her children, walked frantick with pleasure about the room, cried, kiss'd, embraced every person near her."*

And yet, the Court of Naples was at peace with France. By the treaty that had been signed in 1796, the Republic had imposed no heavy or onerous conditions on Ferdinand, and there was nothing to justify an aggression on the part of a power which, without being friendly, could and should have remained neutral. The fear of reprisals might indeed have deterred Marie-Caroline, but she was influenced by Lady Hamilton who, as has been seen, execrated the French, and found in her new love a fresh incentive, even more powerful than her hatred. Emma wanted war, not only because it was necessary to Nelson, but because, in the interest of her future plans, she wished him to reach the highest dignities. On the

* To Nelson—September 8, 1798. Add. MSS., 34,989, f. 4.

other hand, Nelson had absolute need of Naples, as it was the key to the Mediterranean, which otherwise remained closed to him, Austria and the Italian States being at peace with France. Malta belonged to the French; Turkey had not yet broken with the Republic, and Spain had become the ally of the French against the English. In spite of his victory, Nelson still ran the risk of being blockaded in the Mediterranean, and of finding no harbour should Naples refuse to admit him. His interests coincided with his love. Lady Hamilton, who had become Nelson's mouthpiece, and his representative, just as he was a mere tool in her hands, could not fail to urge on a war that was of such consequence to her lover. It was the destiny of this woman with her angel-face to carry destruction and sorrow wherever she went.

Nelson had made his wishes fairly clear before Aboukir Bay. In a letter written from Syracuse on July 22, he complained to Sir William Hamilton that the King of Naples refused to admit more than three or four vessels into his ports. This condition was not peculiar to the Neapolitan Government. It is law amongst all neutral powers, and is sometimes enforced during peace, therefore all the more so in time of war, since harbouring one of the adversaries and allowing him to water and victual is practically favouring the one to the prejudice of the other. Nelson must have known this rule, common to all nations, but his zeal could not brook any obstacle: "Our treatment is scandalous for a great Nation to put up with, and the King's Flag is insulted at every port we look at . . . I have no complaint to make of private attention, quite the contrary. Every body of persons have been on board to offer me civilities."*

Therefore the British Admiral was complaining of the Neapolitan Government, and, as this Government had already done all in its power to give him satisfaction, it would seem that the only object of his apparent anger

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 47.

was to over-rule Ferdinand IV, and drive him—willingly or unwillingly—into the coalition.

Lady Hamilton knew all about this transparent secret, and, naturally, she had already exerted herself to draw the Court of Naples into an alliance with her own country. The victory of the Nile dealt her a wonderful card, of which she made admirable use. Nelson's victory had called forth genuine enthusiasm in Naples, but it was necessary to fan this sentiment and magnify it, in order to overcome the last hesitations of the King by bringing the feelings of the nation to bear upon him. Lachèze, who acted as Minister of France at Naples for a short time, after Garat's departure, relates how Lady Hamilton conducted this campaign.*

Liberté, Egalité.

Naples, 19th Fructidor, Year 6.

The chargé d'affaires of the French Republic at the Court of His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies, to His Excellency Marchese Gallo:

Monsieur le Marquis,

Yesterday I had the honour of conferring with you respecting the scene whereby, the night before last, Mr Hamilton, the British Minister, endeavoured to incite the populace into insulting the arms of the French and Cisalpine Republics. Mr Hamilton was driving with his wife at Santa Lucia. Their satisfaction was evidently so great that, for a wonder, they greeted the people affectionately, explaining to them by signs and gestures the news of a victory won by Admiral Nelson.

* In his *Storia d'Italia dal* 1789 *all* 1814 Botta says that Garat was recalled at the demand of the King of Naples, who complained of the haughty tone adopted by the French Minister. Emma called him insolent. As for Lachèze (Pierre-Joseph de Lachèze-Morel, 1744-1835) he had been deputy of the Tiers Etats, then Secretary at the French Embassy in Naples. Later on he became *conseiller général* for the department Lot. In 1814, Louis XVIII gave him a title, and he became member of the Chambre Introuvable.

At the same time, they pointed ironically to the image of Liberty, which has become a sacred emblem to the French, as also to the Cisalpine Republic, and is destined, Monsieur le Marquis, to make many conquests.

I had always been under the impression that the ministers of civilised nations should know how to behave with self-respect, and not to degrade themselves to acts whereby they seek to curry favour with the crowd in foreign countries, and to stir up sedition against the ministers of other powers, with whom their country may be at war—measures which common decency and the dignity of their position should forbid. The regard which they are bound to show to the Court at which they reside imposes this obligation on them. I am well aware that certain British Ministers, actuated by a spirit of intrigue communicated to them by their home government, have already, in the course of this war, strayed from these principles. But a different attitude was to be expected from Mr Hamilton, the friend of art, the admirer of the great models of antiquity. As for his wife, she cannot be mentioned in an official note from the Minister of France. But I must beg of you, Monsieur le Marquis, to take such measures as prudence may suggest to you, in order to avoid a repetition of the scene which has already taken place. In the interest of your Government, from whom I am capable of exacting marked and prompt reparation in the event of a second offence, which might cause scandal, I must request you to take all care, that the images of the French Republic be treated with the respect due to the nation that has chosen them as an emblem. In the present circumstances, I do not consider it superfluous to make the same request with regard to the person of the representative of the French Republic, as of all French citizens who may be here—I beg of you, Sir, to note this request.

Your's, etc.,

LACHEZE.*

* National Archives of Naples, unpublished.

Citizen Lachèze had very aptly explained the situation. Such difficulties may sometimes occur between Ministers of civilised States, and yet it is surprising that the correct and cautious Hamilton, the peaceful admirer of art, should have fallen into such an error. But he had been influenced by his wife, and, of her "no mention can be made in an official note from the French Minister." If it be remembered what Emma was, it must be admitted that under a polite form, the chargé d'affaires had contrived to inflict the most deadly insult on his beautiful enemy. As the chargé d'affaires reminds him that he had already conferred with him on this subject, it seems probable that the good-natured but pusillanimous Gallo, had asked Lachèze to write this letter, specifying his complaint, so that he might put it before the King. It also seems likely that, prompted by his wife, the King refused to grant satisfaction, obliging his Minister to settle the matter by not replying to the remonstrance, for on 26th Fructidor, Lachèze made another attempt, furnishing new details, the importance of which will be noted:

Monsieur le Marquis,

Before expressing my surprise to you, I was desirous of witnessing the end of the display made by the English in Naples, and more especially their Minister, Mr Hamilton, on the occasion of the victory won by Admiral Nelson. I am well aware that in every nation public spirit is more or less pronounced, and springs from a variety of sentiments: pride, or love of the fatherland; avarice or generosity; the wish to dominate or the cause of philanthropy—whereby all the members of a nation participate in the good or evil that befalls the country, and are prompted to make common cause with it, in prosperity as well as in adversity. When this spirit is guided by principles of justice, order and humanity—the only sources of true glory—it produces stirring events and acts of heroism, that establish the

duration of nations by making them immortal. When, the public spirit of a nation takes its source in the love of gold, all morality is set aside in the pursuit of this end, and it calmly weighs the effects of crime, base intrigues and bloodshed. From such arise all the destructive calamities which having scourged other nations, end by disorganising and loading with ignominy the nation which had sought to overcome them by such means.

In consideration of this national spirit of which I have just spoken, I am not astonished at the loud joy to which the English and their Ministers have given vent on the occasion of an event, of which they only see the immediate consequences. It has been remarked that, in this circumstance, they have acted precisely as they did at Leghorn when, after the naval battle which took place on 23rd Ventôse of the Year III, they gave balls and illuminated the said town, for which, as is well known, the Livournians were held responsible as having allowed these manifestations.

But in this Kingdom, Government is powerful and calls itself independent; therefore, as it is not at war with any nation, it should be impartial towards the subjects of the different States dwelling under its protection. How then do you account for the extraordinary complaisance shown towards the English in their excessive joy regarding a fortunate occurrence, whereas, in a number of circumstances, when the French have won victories over their enemies, their Minister has not even been allowed to publish an account of the event! More than once, Monsieur le Marquis, Citizen Trouvé, chargé d'affaires, has complained to you of these abuses.

In Vienna—and you shared this opinion—we were forbidden to fly the French colours from the windows of the Embassy on the occasion* of a public rejoicing, whereas, here, during three consecutive nights, not only the British Embassy, but most of the English houses, have been illuminated and decorated with British flags.

* At the time Bernadotte was Minister of France. The incident served as a cause, or rather pretext, to the Second Coalition.

I am well aware that reasons will be found justifying this circumstance, as also the fact that the English have dared to distribute money and provisions to the people of Naples, at the very gate of His Majesty's palace. But how will you account for the Cross of Malta, accompanying the initials H.N., which shone outside Mr Hamilton's house, and which can only be interpreted as the initials of Hamilton and Nelson. I know that His Majesty still lays claim to his ancient rights on Malta. Is it to be inferred from the association of the Cross of Malta and Nelson's name, that this Admiral is to defend the claims of His Majesty, and that a treaty and understanding already exist on this head.

It is in this sense that the public has naturally interpreted this particular circumstance, and the other incidents I have mentioned to you. Furthermore, the Neapolitan colours were hoisted on the felucca of the Maltese skipper, Joseph Gaetan, up to the moment of his departure, which he was allowed to effect yesterday evening, although your Government has given me no redress concerning this rebel. These circumstances, together with the measures whereby Mr Hamilton and his wife have lately urged the populace to insult the arms of my Republic, and those of the Cisalpine, besides many other occurrences of a still more serious nature, and to which the English must believe themselves indebted for the success which now causes their rejoicing,—must necessarily appear to me more than doubtful, and inspire me with misgivings, which I must impart to my Government.

These doubts, these misgivings, I hereby record in fulfilment of my ministry.

Your's, etc.,

LACHEZE.*

* No doubt to this second letter an answer was given for, in an undated note, the Queen wrote to Gallo : "I have informed the King of what I think a suitable answer to Lachèse. He made no opposition—on the contrary. You may therefore act." *Correspondance avec le Marquis de Gallo.* Paris, Emile Paul.

In this succession of manifestations, which were so much at variance with Hamilton's cool and forbearing disposition, his wife's influence was evident, and the chargé d'affaires had not failed to detect it. It was she who had distributed money and provisions, so that the Neapolitan people might participate in the joy caused by Britain's victory. It was she who suggested the illumination of the Palazzo, the Cross of Malta, accompanying Nelson's initials, which as Lachèze shrewdly guessed, was a direct challenge to the French. But he was certainly mistaken in believing that the two letters stood for the names of Hamilton and Nelson. The initials H. N. had another meaning. Emma had simply indulged in the whim of a woman anxious to please, and had imagined a means of bestowing delicate flattery on her lover without giving any cause for comment. By the flaming capitals blazing in the night, the triumphant Ambassadress celebrated the glory of Horatio Nelson. Lachèze indeed might think of her husband. She would not.*

The chargé d'affaires was not mistaken in asserting that, through their unceasing efforts, the Hamiltons were endeavouring to drive the Court of Naples into an alliance with England, in defiance of the treaty with France signed scarcely two years before. When Emma did not undertake the negotiations, Hamilton himself applied to Acton, ignoring Gallo, whose weakness and indecision he blamed. As early as May 22, 1798, he wrote: "The Marquis Gallo seem'd unwilling to answer these questions, and very properly said the answering in the affirmative wou'd be a declaration of war with the French Republic. There is no necessity for any formal declaration, but I fear that if I am not authorized to give a satisfactory answer to these questions and my messenger shou'd arrive in London before the fleet shou'd sail, that it might retard, perhaps even prevent its coming into the

* This is also the opinion of M. A. Bonnefons: *Les Rapports avec le Directoire*, ch. iv.

Mediterranean. Our fleet once in the Bay of Naples, I shou'd look upon this glorious country in perfect security, for it has many resources and may still be great and flourishing."*

After the Battle of the Nile, Hamilton's demands became more pressing, and on August 27 he referred to a letter, written in the preceding month:

To His Excellency Sir John Acton,

Your Excellency will recollect having read in Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson's letter to me, dated from Syracuse, July 20, and at the moment of his last departure the following words: "The mast, yards, etc., for the *Vanguard* will I hope be prepared directly; for shou'd the French be so strongly secured in Port, that I cannot get at them, I shall immediately shift my flag into some other ship, and send the *Vanguard* to Naples to be refitted, for hardly any other person but myself wou'd have continued on service so long in such a wretched state."†

If Nelson expressed himself in this way before the victory, giving orders to Ferdinand of Naples as though he were the vassal of Great Britain, what demands would he not make after Aboukir Bay had rendered him master of the Mediterranean!

Nevertheless, he was somewhat embarrassed as to his future movements. Should he cruise along the coasts of Egypt and Syria and try to seize Buonaparte? Should he chase Admiral Villeneuve who, after the disaster of Aboukir Bay, had fled towards Malta with the remnant of the French fleet? Should he return to Naples and repair his battered vessels that had suffered much during the battle? He shrank from the latter decision as though a secret presentiment warned him that he must be on his guard against some danger awaiting him there. Had he not written to Lord St Vincent: "I detest this voyage to

* The original is in the National Archives of Naples—unpublished.

† National Archives of Naples.

Naples; nothing but absolute necessity would force me to the measure. Syracuse in future . . . is my Port."*

He was, apparently, conscious that Lady Hamilton had an evil influence over him, and felt that he must fly from her. He was still hesitating, when a Neapolitan frigate, which Ferdinand had sent in search of him, brought him a letter in which the King called him his deliverer (*liberator*); and another from Emma congratulating him on his victory, and calling him by every flattering name suggested to her by the designs she had upon him. Both these letters urged him most earnestly to return to Naples, and this put an end to his hesitations. He silenced his forebodings by arguing that his vessels had been sadly maimed during the battle, that Naples was the only port where they could be properly repaired, and that he had many wounded on board who could be nursed at Naples better than anywhere else. In a word, he put forward all the fallacious arguments a man has recourse to when he decides to follow his inclinations rather than fulfil his duty. Although he had written to St Vincent that at Syracuse "every refreshment may be had for a Fleet,"† he turned his back on Sicily, and set sail for Naples. As he was no enemy of flattery, he rejoiced in the anticipation of the homage of a Court which, however, he despised, and of which he had written to St Vincent that it was composed of "fiddlers and poets, whores and scoundrels—amongst whom there is not one virtuous woman or one man who does not deserve the gallows or at least the galleys." Nevertheless, he thirsted for the incense of this dissolute society. Perhaps he found its atmosphere purified by the disinterestedness and sincerity of the virtuous Emma; for it is impossible to deny that Lady Hamilton's influence prevailed on him to take a decision which was at variance with his plans and the interests of his fleet. Triumph and the love of

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 128.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 128.

a beautiful woman awaited him in Naples, and to Naples he went.

The most wonderful reception had been prepared for him. Colletta who witnessed it writes: "The King, the Queen, the Minister of Britain and his wife, sailing in boats that were adorned as for a rejoicing, went far out to sea, to meet the fortunate Nelson and, having gone on to his vessel, they honoured him in various ways. The King bestowed on him a magnificent sword, praising him with such expressions of joy, that he could not have shown more delight had the victory been won by his own army, and for the salvation of his Kingdom. The Queen offered him various presents, amongst others a jewel bearing this inscription: 'To the hero of Aboukir.' The Ambassador, Sir W. Hamilton, thanked him in the name of Britain, and the ravishing Lady showed that she was in love with him."*

Palumbo, another Italian historian, gives some details concerning the ridiculous, theatrical atttitude which Lady Hamilton affected when she went on board the *Vanguard* and greeted Nelson. "She was preparing one of those stage effects which she had so well practised in London, and which was calculated to produce the desired impression on the happy conqueror. It was impossible for any one to be duped by such a comedy."† And no one was taken in except Nelson. He believed in the grimaces and antics of the performer of Attitudes, and let himself be ensnared by her ridiculous behaviour, and the incense she wafted to him in public—so much so that, in the simplicity of his heart, he, the lover, wrote a detailed account of the scene to his wife, the grotesque and affected side of the comedy escaping him entirely: "The poor wretched *Vanguard* arrived here on 22 September. I must endeavour to convey to you something of what passed . . . Sir William and Lady Hamilton came out to

* *Colletta*, vol. iii, ch. ii.

† Palumbo, *Carteggio di Maria Carolina*, Prefazione iv.

sea attended by numerous boats with emblems, etc. They, my most respectable friends, had really been laid up and seriously ill; first from anxiety, and then from joy. It was imprudently told Lady Hamilton in a moment, and the effect was like a shot; she fell apparently dead, and is not yet perfectly recovered from severe bruises. Alongside came my honoured friends: the scene in the boat was terribly affecting; up flew her Ladyship, and exclaiming 'O God, is it possible?' she fell into my arm more dead than alive. Tears, however, soon set matters to rights . . . I hope some day to have the pleasure of introducing you to Lady Hamilton, she is one of the best women in this world; she is an honour to her sex. Her kindness, with Sir William's, to me, is more than I can express: I am in their house, and I may now tell you, it required all the kindness of my friends to set me up. Lady Hamilton intends writing to you. May God Almighty bless you, and give us in due time, a happy meeting."*

No doubt these words were written in order to make his wife feel kindly disposed towards those who had nursed him so well. "The continued kindness of Sir William and Lady Hamilton must ever make you and I love them, and they are deserving the love and admiration of all the world."† (October 1 to 6, 1798.)

None but a moon-struck lover could fall into such excesses. Because an adventuress, whose secret designs and manœuvres remained hidden from his naive credulity, threw herself at his head, he at once concluded that she possessed every virtue, and longed to present this unworthy woman to his wife. He even wanted other people to love her as he himself already worshipped her. His officers did not share his illusions with regard to the merits of the sometime courtesan. Most of them were acquainted with her past. With a contemptuous smile they watched her as she began playing her part, moving

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii. p. 130.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 138.

about with affected agitation, in the barge that bore her towards the *Vanguard*. As the sea was in a state of greater turmoil than the restless Lady herself, the officer in command, was obliged to beg her to remain quiet, if she did not wish to upset the boat. It has been seen, from Nelson's own account, that she made up for this enforced calm when she came on board the flag-ship. Unconscious, or affecting to be so, Emma was borne into the Admiral's saloon, where by degrees she pretended to revive. True love has no need for such artifices. Endless compliments were then exchanged on all sides, and, after lunch, during which many dithyrambic toasts were given, the party returned to land. In the midst of the acclamations of a whole nation, pressed by a crowd that was so dense it was hard to open a way for the carriages, the victorious Nelson passed through the town, and appeared more triumphant because of Emma's ovation. Lady Hamilton sat beside him, her husband drove behind with the King. They reached the Embassy which was already illuminated and decorated with the Cross of Malta and the two initials, that had called forth the just protests of the Minister of France.

Since Emma could debase herself by playing this absurd comedy of love, it must be inferred that she had already given herself to Nelson, and was anxious to transform into a lasting passion, the *amourette* which he might otherwise have forgotten, and treated as a mere travelling adventure. If, in spite of these appearances, he had not yet done so, it is certain that after the above premeditated scene, she had no great difficulty in persuading him to accept her love.

At the same time King George raised the Admiral to the Peerage, making him Baron Nelson of the Nile. On September 24, to celebrate his victory, he gave an entertainment on board the *Agamemnon* which now flew his colours. The King, the Queen, as well as the Hamiltons, Acton and the Ministers, lunched on board the *Agamemnon*, which was all flowers and festivity.

On the other hand, Emma was not content with the boisterous welcome she had bestowed on the hero. On the following day, September 25, she and her husband entertained Acton and "our brave Admiral," together with the principal officers of his fleet.* September 29, Nelson's birthday, was celebrated as though it were a day of national rejoicing, and who but Emma could have made known that the hero was forty on that day? On October 1, the Queen received Hamilton, his wife and Nelson.† On the 15th the King of Naples lunched on board Nelson's ship; and the Admiral having kissed the King's hand, His Majesty raised him up in a cordial embrace. The Admiral assured the King that he would serve him with the same zeal as he served his Royal master.‡

It will be noticed that Nelson entertained his guests at lunch. His evenings belonged to Emma, and he returned to the Palazzo Sessa and the fair enchantress.

* Hamilton to Acton, September 25. National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

† Hamilton to Acton, October 1. National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

‡ Hamilton to Acton, October 25. National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

CHAPTER VII

Nelson's design on Malta—Lord St Vincent's letter—Nelson's first letters to Lady Hamilton—Preparations for war at Naples—Lacombe St. Michel becomes Minister of France—His complaints to the Government of Naples—The council of war at Caserta—Berthier's ultimatum—The Neapolitans invade the State of Rome—Strange situation of Lacome St. Michel—The Neapolitans at Rome—Their retreat—Projected flight to Sicily—Assassination of Ferreri—Lady Hamilton's devotion to the royal family—The court on the English ships—The death of Prince Albert.

IT is only fair to Nelson to say that he did not rest upon his laurels, nor did he become absorbed by his happiness. It proved that, although he was sometimes weak, he possessed great strength of mind—a quality that is not often met with. He was staying at the Embassy. Hamilton's loyal disposition made him place absolute confidence in his illustrious guest, and absolute trust in the woman whom, as he thought, by marriage, he had raised to his own level. Doubtless Nelson devoted his evenings only to his love, for very serious occupations filled his days. He was preparing an expedition against Malta, proclaiming—sincerely or otherwise—that he intended to restore the island to the King of Naples, who possessed incontestable rights, since it was as King of Naples that Charles V had given it to the Knights Hospitallers when driven out of Rhodes. If it were a pretext, it was a clever one, for it gave Ferdinand IV the occasion, if not the right, of assisting a general who was fighting for him. Immediately after Nelson's return from Aboukir Bay the demands which had been so long put off, were suddenly granted. On September 25, Hamilton wrote to Acton: "Admiral Nelson desires me

Fabris tinxt. *A. Robinson fecit*

THE AMBASSADOR'S HOUSE AT NAPLES

to return your Excellency many thanks for the kind and ready assistance he finds in refitting his ships as his present favorite object is to endeavor to recover the Island of Malta and give it to its proper owner the King of the two Sicilies as he told his majesty this evening."*

At length, after spending a month with his beloved, Nelson was forced to sail. How short those busy days must have seemed to the heart that was so devoted to her, and how difficult it was to satisfy the ardent love the roving sailor felt for the woman who was tied down to her hearth—not indeed by any sense of duty, of which she had no understanding, but at least by a wish to respect appearances. Like many other people, Emma believed that her duty merely consisted in an outward show of decorum. She could not leave her husband and run after her lover without sacrificing her position at the Court of Naples.

Evidently, she could not commit herself to this extent; but as her connection with Nelson increased her prestige and power, she considered it necessary, in view of her interests, present and future, to inform the whole world that she was his mistress. Sir William, of course, was the only person who remained ignorant of the notorious fact. An imprudent action which she committed wilfully and with direct purpose, should however have caused the scales to fall from his eyes. Mr Walter Sichel relates that at this period, Lady Hamilton bewailed being childless. Why should this woman who did not care for children, suddenly indulge in these lamentations? It is a positive fact that she abandoned the daughter to whom she had given birth when she was only seventeen years of age, and later on she would have treated Nelson's child in the same way, had not he been a good father, and loved his child. As long as he lived, Emma looked after Horatia in order to please him; after his death, considerations of a pecuniary nature dictated the same attitude; but at no time was she influenced by the maternal instinct. Mrs

* From an unpublished letter in the National Archives of Naples.

Gamlin puts forward Emma's dislike of children as a proof that had Horatia really been her child, she would have abandoned her just as she did her first daughter. From the consideration of these facts it seems evident that her only reason for bemoaning her childless condition in 1798, was to guard herself against the possible consequences of her intrigue with Nelson.

Whether this *liaison* began in the month of June or in September, it was known at Gibraltar at the time, and Lord St Vincent, Nelson's chief, had been informed of the fact. He had already met Emma, and it is impossible to say how intimate he may have been with her. In any event, being a gallant man, and finding himself outdone in love as well as in fame by his subordinate, he made the best of it, and wrote to the Ambassador's wife amusing notes that deserve to be quoted:

Gibraltar, 18 October, 1798.

My dear Madam,

The prodigies of valour performed by your new Chevalier have, I fear, obliterated the memory of your ancient Knight. Nevertheless, I beg your Ladyship will lay me at the feet of the Queen of the Two Sicilies, and assure Her Majesty of my profound respect for her person, and that my life is devoted to the defence of it; and for yourself, accept every kind wish of your Ladyship's truly affectionate and faithful Knight,

St Vincent.*

Admiral's House, Rosia, Gibraltar,
October 28, 1798.

My dear Lady Hamilton,

Ten thousand most grateful thanks are due to your Ladyship, for restoring the health of our invaluable friend Nelson, on whose life the fate of the remaining Government in Europe, whose system has not been deranged by those devils, depends. Pray, do not

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 217.

let your fascinating Neapolitan dames approach too near him, for he is made of flesh and blood, and cannot resist their temptations.

Lady St Vincent will be transported with your attention to her . . . .

I have obeyed your Ladyship's commands respecting Tom Bowen, who is now Captain of *L'Aquilon*, and gone to Lisbon to take possession of her; and his brother William, who married a daughter of Sir William Parker, I have appointed to the *Caroline*, the finest frigate I have, and he is employed on the most advantageous service for filling his pockets. Should your Ladyship have any other protegé, I desire you will not spare me . . .

Continue to love me (the term is equivocal) and rest assured of the most unfeigned and affectionate regard of, my dear Lady Hamilton,

Your faithful and devoted Knight,

ST VINCENT.*

On December 7 he wrote: "I hope soon to hear our dear Lord Nelson is quite well under your fostering care," and on February 27, 1799: "Continue to nurse my excellent friend Nelson."†

These notes are full of the most delightful irony. As the 18th century was about to disappear in a torrent of

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 219. Mrs Gamlin quotes the end of this letter and concludes that her heroine had inspired Lord St Vincent with true admiration; however, she carefully, and with good reason, avoids the first sentence which is full of irony. According to Mr Walter Sichel and M. Fauchier-Magnan, Lord St Vincent called Nelson and Emma "just a pair of silly sentimental fools." The only mistake he made was to attribute any feeling to Emma.

† *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, pp. 224 and 229. During the endless round of festivities given in his honour, Nelson had fallen seriously ill. The combined efforts of the physicians of the Court and of the fleet, together with the early fruits from the hot-houses at Caserta, the exquisite wines from the King's cellars, and above all, the presence of Lady Hamilton who nursed him, at length restored him to health.

bloodshed, St Vincent carried on its spirit unconsciously, perhaps, but with undeniable talent. Nevertheless, Emma was clever enough to feel the sting of sarcasm (Mrs Gamlin does not) concealed by St Vincent's affectation of courtesy. The constant allusions to Nelson, to her care of him, to the Neapolitan ladies who might tempt him—all these remarks were very aggravating. It is better not to talk too much about certain things! Emma must have reproved him, for one of his letters winds up in a very different strain to the others: "I have the honour to be, with the truest respect, esteem and regard, your Ladyship's very affectionate, humble servant."*

Did St Vincent really entertain such feelings of respect for the nameless girl, the former artists' model, the mistress of Greville and Nelson? It is difficult to say what his sentiments really were. Certainly, he realised that Emma was a power, and that as such, she must be treated with regard. The above mentioned lines were written from Rosia House, Gibraltar, on December 7, 1798, when the French and Neapolitan troops were fighting in the Papal States. At such a moment, a woman having influence at Court, was not to be neglected. On January 17 of the following year, St Vincent wrote to her once more: "God bless you, my dear Madam, and enable you to persevere in the comfort and support of the great and amiable Queen."†

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 224. Another officer, Sir Alexander John Ball, used the same terms: "I remain, with sincere respect and esteem, my dear Madam, your Ladyship's most devoted and obliged humble servant." (*Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 235). And yet he also chaffed her: "I find that you fascinate all the navy, as much at Palermo as you did at Naples. . . May you live a thousand years!" (*Idem*, p. 237.)

As Nelson had not the same reason as Emma for publishing his love affairs, he quarrelled with Souwarof who had written to him: "I thought you had gone from Malta to Egypt to complete there the wonders of our times. Palermo is not Cythera." (December 12, 1799.) This letter was mentioned in the *Athenæum* of March 18, 1876.

† Pettigrew, vol. i, p. 187.

Had Emma been as discerning as she was clever, she would have perceived that all this affectation of respect and esteem was showered on her because she was the friend of the Queen of Naples. It was the old story of the Ass laden with Relics. She may have understood this later when, her husband and lover being dead and her fortune lost, she entered the ranks once more, and had to bid farewell to all homage. Her former admirers turned their backs on her: *donec eris felix*.

On October 24, Nelson anchored in sight of Malta. On the voyage he had not ceased dreaming of the loved one who had opened to him the gates of Paradise. The first letter he wrote was addressed to her. He ought first to have written to the King of Naples, to Acton or Hamilton, submitting to them his observations or demands, but he was so carried away by his love for Emma that he confided everything to her, making her his military and political correspondent. This letter is the first given in the edition published in 1814, that is to say the first letter kept by Emma for, as we know, he had already written to her previous to June 30:

Vanguard, off Malta,
October 24, 1798.

My dear Madam,

After a long passage, we are arrived; and it is as I suspected—the ministers at Naples know nothing of the situation of the island. Not a house or bastion of the Town is in the possession of the Islanders . . .

Ball will have the management of the blockade after my departure; as it seems, the Court of Naples think my presence may be necessary, and useful, in the beginning of November . . . However, all my views are to serve and save the Two Sicilies; and to do that which their Majesties may wish me, even against my own opinion, when I come to Naples and that country is at war. I shall wish to have a meeting with General Acton on this subject.

You will, I am sure do me justice with the Queen; for

I declare to God, my whole study is, how to best meet her approbation.

May God bless you and Sir William! and ever believe me, with the most affectionate regard,

Your obliged and faithful friend,

HORATIO NELSON.

Like many lovers, Nelson added a postcript, which, in his eyes at least, was far more important than the letter itself. To Emma it may have been comprehensible, but to us the meaning is so involved, that it is necessary to give the entire original text. The reader may exercise his ingenuity in deciphering the enigma.

I may possibly, but that is not certain, send in the inclosed letter. Shew it to Sir William. This must depend on what I hear *and see;* for I believe scarcely any thing I hear. Once more God bless you.*

"Once more God bless you." Whatever the sense of the above lines may be, this ejaculation clearly denotes the spirit in which they were written. On the same day, on October 24, Nelson wrote to Hamilton an insignificant letter in which he made no reference to his, the Ambassador's, wife. Three days later, having recovered his self-possession, Nelson sent Hamilton a more interesting letter, in which he complained that the Court of Naples made no effort to help on the expedition to Malta. He asked for instructions, adding: "I trust General Acton will forgive an honest seaman for telling plain truths. *As for the other Minister, I do not understand him.* We are different men. He has been bred at Court, and I in a rough element."† Again not a word for Emma.

However, events were hurrying on in Naples, and the Government of Ferdinand IV no longer deserved Nelson's reproaches. Ever since the victory of the Nile, the

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 3.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 162.

renewal of hostilities had been decided on. Nevertheless, some scruple or apprehension withheld the monarchs from openly declaring war, so that, if necessary they might profess that they had acted in good faith. This twofold purpose may possibly be explained by the contrary influences of Gallo and Acton. The former was anxious to maintain peace, the latter eager for war, and there was no authority in the Kingdom to decide which opinion was to predominate. Acton concentrated all his efforts on trying to disgust and exasperate the French residents and their Minister, by every imaginable vexatious measure. The latter complained to Gallo, the Prime Minister, who, being powerless to give them satisfaction, seldom replied to their remonstrances, but endeavoured to pacify the belligerents. Garat had just left Naples. During the interim, Citizen Lachèze acted as chargé d'affaires, and was succeeded by Lacombe Saint-Michel. To Emma, who hated the Jacobins, each successive appointment was worse than the last. She had called Garat a regicide; but this epithet could with much more truth, be applied to Lacombe. As Minister of Justice, Garat had simply read the death sentence to Louis XVI. Personally he had taken no active part in a deed which his natural moderation may even have led him to condemn. On the other hand, Lacombe had been a member of the Convention and had voted with the small majority that caused the King's head to fall. It must be admitted that the Republic was mistaken in choosing such men as representatives.* It would have been easy to send, at least to the countries governed by relations of Louis XVI, ambassadors who were neither regicides nor ministers in 1793. About this period, Sieyès, who had voted for the King's death in these words: "*La mort sans phrases*," was Ambassador of France at the Court of Prussia. As such, he had asked

* "Let them send us a descendant of Cartouche. Well and good! But not a Conventional!" exclaimed the Queen of Naples, the sister of Marie-Antoinette, when writing to the Marquis Gallo And she was right. *Correspondance avec le Marquis Gallo*, p. 250, Emile Paul, 1911.

to be introduced to old Marshal Knobelsdorf, who promptly replied *ad hominem*: "*Non, sans phrases*!"* In spite of the powerful position she occupied, the great nation was no longer respected.

On the other hand, France was involved in so many great undertakings, and esteemed herself so fortunate to have emerged victorious from the terrible home crisis and the toils of a formidable coalition, that she wished henceforth to avoid all conflicts, even with the smallest States. Consequently, she impressed on her Ambassadors the necessity of acting with the greatest circumspection, and of maintaining peace at any price. The result of this conciliatory attitude was that the Court of Naples, and the Neapolitans themselves, who from motives of religious fanaticism hated the French quite as much as their own Government, gave full vent to their feelings by heaping insults and outrages on the French, whose Government refused to retaliate. Garat's position as Minister had become unbearable, and Lacombe Saint-Michel fared no better, especially after the victory of the Nile. On the 18th Fructidor, two French vessels, the *St Vincent* from Marseilles, and the Xebec *Marie* from La Ciotat entered the port of Naples, and hoisted the tricolour flag. Immediately hooting and jeering greeted them on all sides from the small craft and the fishermen's boats in the Bay. Some cried out that the French had stolen Venice, Malta and Rome.† In the coarse language, of which the *bassa gente* of Naples possess such an astonishing vocabulary, thousands of insults were heaped on the French and their flag. In the midst of the uproar, Désiré Clavelly, Captain of the *Marie* managed to land; but when he attempted to return on board, his boat was pelted with stones, and it was impossible for him to embark.‡ A French musician having

* *Mémoires*, by Dampmartin, p. 398.

† The Revolution had broken out in Rome on February 10, 1798.

‡ Declaration made before the Consulate on 29th Fructidor.

asked for permission to reside in Naples, the commissary of the district in which he lived, replied that his music was not wanted.* On another occasion, Lacombe Saint-Michel wished to hire a box at the theatre; four times in succession he was told that there were none to be had.† Finally, the coat of arms of the Republic placed above the windows of the Consulate, on Piazza Santa Lucia, was pelted with stones far on into the night.‡ Lacombe expostulated with Gallo,§ but received no reply. When he asked for passports, Gallo informed him that as a general measure, the Neapolitan Government had decided not to issue any. Again, the Minister of France remonstrated in a very dignified manner.

Naples,
30th Brumaire, Year VII of the French Republic.
November 20, 1798.

MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS,

In the course of nine days, I have three times begged your Excellency to deliver to me passports, enabling me to send off a courier, and allow the despatch-bearer whom I received on the 26th Brumaire, to return to Rome. I have now received the letter which you had the goodness to write to me on November 18, and in which you inform me positively that His Majesty has given you absolute orders forbidding you to issue any passports. If this measure is a general one affecting all the Ambassadors, it does not behove me to discuss the insult inflicted on the various States of Europe. But I must attend to the interests of my country. I applied

*Lachèze to Gallo, 20th Fructidor. National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

† Lacombe to Gallo, 12th Brumaire, Year VII. National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

‡ Official report drawn up by the Consul General and the secretary on 16th Brumaire of the Year VII.

§ 20th Brumaire, National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

directly to you, and, in spite of the general measure enforced, I believed you would submit my demand to the King. But, it is palpable that this measure is to be applied to France only. Am I to consider myself a prisoner in Naples? I must believe it, if I am not allowed to communicate with the outer world. If you are at war with the Republic, you are bound to send me away, but I have not the right to abandon my post, unless this be the case or I am recalled.

In the name of my Government and of the law of Nations, I claim the freedom which the Ambassador of His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies enjoys in Paris, and surely, it will seem very extraordinary that I should be obliged to make such a demand. It is in vain that the Neapolitan Government seek to prevent my communicating with France, and in spite of these efforts, I shall find means to instruct my Government.

All Europe shall know that the Court of Naples has openly violated, in the person of the Ambassador of the French Republic, those sacred rights which all civilised nations acknowledge.

Your's, etc.,

J. P. Lacombe Saint-Michel.

Naples,

1st Frimaire of the Year VII of the French Republic,

November 21, 1798.

Monsieur le Marquis,

Although you have not answered my letter of 20th Brumaire and in spite of the fact that I know how useless it is to send you any further communications, until war be declared between our two Governments, I shall not cease to protest against the violation of the treaty of peace concluded on October 11, 1796, and which binds the Republic of France and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. It is a notorious fact that wine, ammunition and

Neapolitan troops have been embarked on English and Portuguese vessels, and this constitutes a threefold infringement of Article 4 of the treaty signed October 11, 1796. I must protest against such transgressions. It is my duty and I shall have the courage to accomplish it. I hereby beg of your Excellency to acknowledge receipt of the present note as also that of the 20th Brumaire.

Your's, etc.,

J. P. Lacombe Saint-Michel.*

In those feverish days, comic incidents occurred, as well as tragic ones. For instance, a French musician, named Mottainville, was arrested as he left the Embassy, where Lacombe had entrusted him with two pieces of poetry that he was to set to music.†

By this time the Court of Naples had indeed come to a decision, but would not own to it. As Hamilton had suggested six months earlier, the Neapolitans intended to open hostilities without having previously declared war.‡ The present occasion was a most favourable one for the furtherance of their designs. The French were in Rome, where they had proclaimed the Republic. The King of Naples, inclined to believe that France was downcast by the disaster of Aboukir Bay, maintained that his Kingdom was threatened by this new invasion of the Jacobins, and demanded some pledge of security or compensation, such as the surrender of Benevento and Ponte-Corvo, which were at the very door of his possessions. Since the Pope had been overthrown, the King was quite ready to stretch out his hand and seize part of the spoils.§ He

* National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

† National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

‡ Hamilton's letter of May 22, ch. vi, p. 129.

§ On September 8, 1799, the Queen of Naples had asked for "Tuscany and a line which, starting from the *Présides*, would put the Neapolitan kingdom in communication with it by Civita Vecchia." *Correspondance avec le Marquis de Gallo.* No. 233. This also meant despoiling the Pope.

was a religious-minded man, or rather, like the Queen, he was more superstitious than devout. But his main object was the aggrandisement of his Kingdom, and no consideration could prevail against his own interests, which had become a matter of principle with him. His conduct would have been more dignified had he frankly laid claim to what he considered his rights, allowing the question to be settled by the Ambassadors of each power, and threatening France with a declaration of war, should his demands be neglected. But had he been inclined to take such a course, the timorous Gallo would have intervened, for, at any cost he wanted to avoid a conflict with the great Republic.* On the other hand, the King did not dare to dismiss Gallo, for that would have been equivalent to publishing his own hostile intentions. Moreover, as it often happens in the case of such insignificant people who give umbrage to no one, this Minister was appreciated both in France and Austria, between whom he had negotiated a treaty of peace highly honourable to both powers. These considerations explain the strange conduct of the Government of Ferdinand IV, which appeared to be constantly hesitating and uncertain, whereas, in reality, it was steadily making for the object in view. It is also well not to lose sight of the influences brought to bear on the King, and of which, although they were predominating, there is no documentary proof. Nelson and Hamilton prompted Ferdinand who, being weak and "stupid" as Emma said, submitted willingly to their direction through the intermediation of Acton. Above all, he was under the influence of Marie-Caroline, who, being well trained by Lady Hamilton, did all that her friend wished, and Emma, prompted by her hus-

* Later on, the Queen reproached herself with not having listened to this prudent adviser. On January 27, 1790, she wrote to him from Palermo: "Burn my letter, and let me know that you have done so. It is the outpouring of my heart to a faithful friend. Had we listened to him, and profited by his counsels, we should not now be unfortunate. And the worst has not come yet." *Correspondanee de la Reine Marie-Caroline*, by Commandant Weil. No. 310, Emile Paul, Paris.

band and her lover, advocated the interests of British policy, which, in a certain measure was inspired by the inveterate and ardent hatred felt in England towards Papists.

During Nelson's stay in Naples, a council of war had been held at Caserta. Nelson and Hamilton had been present at this meeting where all the final arrangements were made. Austria was asked to provide a General, and Mack was chosen. The troops would have received immediate orders to march, but that the army, being composed of mercenaries who were undisciplined and insufficiently trained, presented an inadequate means of carrying on warfare.* Nelson wrote to Lord Spencer that the King of Naples had called him to San Germano "to concert with General Mack and General Acton the commencement of the War."† It was impossible to conceal these preparations from the French, and the troops that had invested Rome, were informed of the hostile intentions of the Court of Naples. The Commander-in-chief, General Berthier, sent General Balait to Naples, instructing him to demand of Ferdinand the expulsion of the Roman refugees; the dismissal of Acton; the right of passage through Neapolitan territory to Benevento and Ponte-Corvo; the payment of the tribute which the King owed to the Pope as his feudatory, and, finally, the removal of the British Ambassador Hamilton. These preposterous exactions forced the Neapolitan Government into declaring war, which was what Berthier had anticipated. For the last six month Ferdinand's policy had been a tissue of lies and deception, nevertheless, under

* In his *Annali*, p. 93, Coppi says that "the army being composed of troops which, for the most part, had never seen any fighting, great difficulties arose at once with regard to the communications, the transport of ammunition, and still more in the execution of orders, and the getting in touch with the enemy." Yet Mack was so wanting in perspicacity that he wrote to Nelson they were "the finest troops in Europe." *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 170.

† *Dispatches*, November 13, 1798, vol. iii, p. 170.

this insult, he recovered his dignity, or perhaps his councillors did so for him, and the demands of the French were rejected. Benevento and Ponte-Corvo were invested, and, after having summoned the French to evacuate the Roman territory, it was decided on November 24, to march forward.

At this crisis the Queen wrote to her daughter, the Empress: "We are in the painful position of not being able to avoid war. On all sides we are threatened by the French . . . We are about to be attacked in our own land, along an enormous frontier that is unfortified, and at five stages from the capital, which will cause disorder and general perturbation. Thus we must go . . ."

In his proclamation the King said: "Far from wishing to renew hostilities with any foreign power, the desire to render to the Holy Church the homage due to her is the only motive that has induced us to set out on this undertaking. We therefore exhort . . . the generals and commanders of every foreign army to evacuate immediately with their troops the Roman territory, without taking any outward part in the destiny of that State, whose fate, by reason of its position, and of the most lawful motives, is of particular interest to our Royal power."

These words were full of dignity and, to a certain extent, they were justified. As a singular consequence of the deceitful policy followed by the Court of Naples up to this date, the French Ambassador Lacombe was not informed officially of the rupture between the two States.* On the other hand, Championnet, the French General, who had just succeeded to Berthier, did not consider that he was at war with the Neapolitans. This, according to a letter written by Marie-Caroline to her daughter the

* Later, when Lady Hamilton related these events in the Memorial which she addressed to the Prince Regent in order to obtain a pension, she stated that the French Ambassador was given twenty-four hours' notice, and was quite unprepared for such a measure. By the documents above mentioned, it will be seen that, on the contrary Lacombe considered an open rupture imminent.

Empress on November 28, 1782, was the reason he gave for evacuating Rome.* The French General being totally unprepared for such an attack on the part of a neutral power, had first endeavoured to negotiate with Mack; to whom he wrote on 5th Frimaire: "I must request you to remember that peace still exists between the French Republic and the Court of Naples, as also between the Ambassadors of the respective Governments, and finally, that no circumstance can have severed the tie which the last treaty of peace renewed between the French Republic and the King of the Two Sicilies. Under these conditions, to order the French troops to evacuate Roman territory, the defence of which is entrusted to their care, is equivalent to breaking the existing treaties, and violating the law of nations, which does not permit one Government to attack another without having previously declared war."

Mack replied that the French had usurped the Roman States after the treaty of Campo Formio, that neither the King of Naples nor the Emperor had ratified this usurpation. He then stated that should the French refuse to retire, their attitude would be considered as a declaration of war.†

Thereupon, Championnet withdrew and informed his Government of the Neapolitan ultimatum. On the 10th Frimaire the Republic decided to declare war.‡

Before Lacombe could be extricated from the sort of prison in which he was detained, the French commissioners in Rome and the Ambassador himself were obliged

* Quoted by von Helfert in *Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 501.

† *Proclami e Sanzioni della republica napoletana*, Naples. *Stamperia dell Iride*, 1863, p. 130.

‡ The message of the Government of the Directory was issued 14th Frimaire; the vote of the *Conseils* on the 16th. On the 23rd, in another note, the Directory reminded the *Conseils* of the aggressive attitude of the Neapolitan Government, which had instigated the insults heaped on the French Consul on 15th Brumaire, whilst granting help to Nelson and receiving him in Naples.

to expostulate with the Neapolitan Government. The following are the curious documents they sent:

Egalité, Liberté.

Perugia

12th Frimaire Year VII of the Republican Era.

The commissioners of the Executive Directory of the French Republic in the Roman Republic to the Marquis de Gallo Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Monsieur le Marquis,

Considering that in defiance of the last treaty, the Court of Naples has given every sort of Succour to the British fleet, there is no reason to be surprised that hostilities against the French Republic should have begun without any previous declaration of war. That under such circumstances, the French Ambassador and all the diplomatic agents of the Republic should be detained, and all communication with their home Government forbidden or intercepted, is a most unwarrantable proceeding. It is in your power, Monsieur le Marquis, to put an end to these abuses. It is a matter in which your honour, as well as your own safety, are involved, therefore, I hereby make a formal demand that no restraint be laid on the communications which the Ambassador and the Agents of the Republic send to their Government. We further request that they may be allowed to receive all the help of which they may stand in need. We also demand that you safeguard and protect their persons and their property.

Your's, etc.,

Bertoli
Duport.

15th Frimaire, Year VII.

Citizen Lacombe Saint-Michel, Ambassador of the French Republic to His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies to His Excellency the Marquis de Gallo.

Monsieur le Marquis,

It is notorious in this town that a French vessel sent by General Buonaparte, is held in quarantine outside Tarento. Moreover, I am informed that the Neapolitan Government have detained a despatch addressed to me. Yesterday evening your Excellency assured me that no despatch had been intercepted, and that no declaration of war between the two powers had been made, and that no one in the Kingdom of Naples has any right to intercept a despatch intended for me. I therefore claim it back from your Excellency, or request you to be so good as to contradict this report in an official note.

Your's, etc.,

Lacombe Saint-Michel.*

The French Minister in Naples had received correct information, and the facts are confirmed by the following letter which the Queen wrote to Lady Hamilton, and which bears the stamp of the most barefaced outspokenness.

My dear Lady,

Yesterday evening we received an express (courier) from Tarento, where a French brig has arrived, having on board Louis Buonaparte, who has escaped the blockade. He left on 15th Brumaire (November 7, 1798) and the Devil who helps them in everything, brought him here in twenty days. *Despatches from his brother the General are being copied and the Chevalier* (*Hamilton*) *shall see them.* They relate that the Mamelukes have been destroyed, that the troops are in their quarters and want for nothing. They contain a great deal of cipher. Buonaparte demands a diminution of 40m (evidently this means quarantine) and wants Lacombe to send him a secretary of the Legation to confer with him, sending the documents by another secretary, and that he himself shall leave for Paris *en courier.*

My humble advice was to inform the Chevalier; then

* National Archives of Naples. Unpublished.

to send the packet to Tarento saying that under present circumstances despatches cannot be delivered, that he (Louis Buonaparte) having come here in ignorance of these events, will not be kept prisoner, but that he shall not be allowed to travel through the Kingdom, consequently he had better depart. Hoping in the meantime that he may be caught.*

Adieu, ma chère Milady,

CHARLOTTE.

Lacombe Saint-Michel was no less well informed concerning other events. On the 14th Frimaire, Gallo still assured him that there was to be no war, and yet on the 9th Frimaire (November 29, 1798) the Neapolitan troops had entered Rome. This duplicity was the consequence of Hamilton's advice, or his wife's influence. But it was impossible to carry on the comedy much longer, and at length, on December 10, poor Lacombe was requested to leave. He had spent only a short time in Naples, but it had been his lot to play a most difficult part.† And in

* She hoped he might be taken by the English, for Nelson, being warned by Hamilton, through the Queen's letter to Emma, was about to chase the French brig. As for the Dispatches addressed to Lacombe, they never reached him. Those written by Louis Buonaparte were opened by the Queen, who, after having them copied, showed them to Hamilton and returned them to Louis Buonaparte at Tarento. Letter quoted by M. Gagnière in *La reine Marie-Caroline de Naples*, p. 78. This odious custom of unsealing letters was a state institution in Naples. When Count de Vaudreuil, an émigré, went from Rome to Naples, he wrote to the Duke d'Artois: "Do not write to me whilst I am in Naples for all letters are read." *Correspondance intime du Comte de Vaudreuil et du Comte d'Artois*, by L. Pingaud, vol. i, p. 73.

† In his *Storia d'Italia*, vol. xvi, Botta relates that during the days that preceded the entrance of the French into Naples, the people wanted to kill Lacombe, but some humane royalists hid him and saved his life (*alcuni amatori del nome reale, che piu risguardarono all' umanita che alle opinione*). It would seem that Lacombe was rash enough to delay his departure. M. André Bonnefons relates that the unfortunate Ambassador sailed in a Genoese vessel that was captured off the coast of Tunis; Lacombe had some difficulty in getting released. According to Commander Weil and the Marchese Somma Circello, Lacombe left Naples on November 9. His own letter proves that he was still there on the 15th Frimaire. (December 5.)

the end he was only allowed to go because France had declared war. (16th Frimaire.)

The Neapolitan expedition fared no better. The poor King's advisers had persuaded him to join the army, by assuring him he would play an important part, for which, by the way, he was absolutely unfitted. On November 29 he entered Rome; but on December 10, in consequence of Championnet's success, he was obliged to leave the city. On December 22 the Neapolitan troops, commanded by Mack, retreated to Capua. It then became evident that the victorious French were about to march on Naples. Should the capital be forsaken? It has been asserted that the King was ready to face the possibility of a siege, for he believed in the courage of the Neapolitans and the loyalty of the Lazzaroni, with whom he was very popular, as he shared their tastes and treated them as familiar comrades.* According to another report, the Queen and her friends frightened him into consenting to fly, by causing one of his couriers, Ferreri, whom he had entrusted with a letter for Nelson, to be murdered on December 21. One of Marie-Caroline's emissaries, a man named de Simone, is said to have pointed out Ferreri to the mob as being a French spy. This may be true, for in those days of wild anxiety and bloodshed the darkest deeds were perpetrated. However, without formal evidence, it would be unjust to impute this crime to the Queen, even though her record be not otherwise spotless. In a letter to Lady Hamilton, the Queen later declared that had she been in the King's place she would have remained at Naples.† It is well

* By way of preparing for the expected invasion, drilling grounds had been established. The Queen sometimes rode there accompanied by the King disguised as an equerry ; but more frequently she came dressed as a *vivandière*, whilst the King wore the garb of an inn-keeper. Occasionally dressed as a fisherman or hawker, Ferdinand was seen at the corner of a street, selling fish he had caught or the game he had killed. After driving preposterous bargains, he would distribute the money to his boisterous admirers the Lazzaroni. *Mémoires*, General Baron Thiébault, vol. ii, p. 258.

† Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 297.

known how easily a life may be forfeited during revolutionary times. If a man be seen hurrying along, bearing papers to which he seems to attach great importance, this will suffice to convict him as a spy. He is promptly put to death, and when it is too late his murderers discover his real identity. In the turmoil of a Revolution such incidents will occur more frequently in a country whose inhabitants are always ready with their knives, and set small value upon human life. Let it be hoped that the murder of the luckless Ferreri was merely the consequence of some such unfortunate mistake.

Whatever the truth may be, this tragedy effectually decided the King and Queen to fly, and they resolved to seek refuge in Sicily. It was scarcely the moment to brand as cowards those whom they were about to abandon in the midst of troubles, which they alone had brought on the land.*

By the following words written to Lady Hamilton, and which she showed to the Queen, Nelson had unconditionally promised to assist the Neapolitan Sovereigns in all their undertakings, "and to do that which their Majesties may wish me, even against my own opinion, when I come to Naples; and that country is at war."†

In haste, the royal treasures, costly furniture belonging to the crown, together with precious works of art discovered at Herculaneum and Pompeii, were conveyed on board English and Neapolitan vessels. In order to ensure the removal of these valuables without arousing the suspicions of the mob, Lady Hamilton, at some personal risk, was obliged to explore a subterranean passage

* Queen Marie-Caroline to the Empress, December 11 1798; "Our infamous troops, bribed and sold, do nothing but fly. No sailors are to be found. Every one is weak or corrupt. The nobles pull long faces, hide their money and belongings; make no offers—do nothing. Magistrates and lawyers hide from the Court, plotting. The military run away and are infamous cowards." *Histoire Générale des Emigrés*, by H. Forneron.

† *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 5.

MARIE-CAROLINE AND HER FAMILY
From a print in the British Museum

leading from the Palace to the seashore.* Emma was the soul of the whole expedition, and a Providence to the Royal Family. In a letter to Lord St Vincent, Nelson relates that there were no beds on board, and that there had been no time to make any preparations for receiving the royal guests. Ferdinand had been able to bring only one servant. Emma, remembering her early occupations, became the serving maid of the Queen and Nelson: "Lady Hamilton provided her own beds, linen, etc., and became *their slave*, . . . nor did her Ladyship enter a bed the whole time they were on board. Good Sir William also made every sacrifice for the comfort of the august Family embarked with him . . ."†

British merchants residing in Naples had been given

* See Lady Hamilton's Memorial to the Prince Regent. General Thiébault writes in his *Mémoires* (vol. ii, p. 291): "It is nevertheless doubtful if, in spite of their anger, the people would have allowed the King to depart, had not Lady Hamilton, the wife of the Ambassador, and the friend of the Queen, revealed to the latter a subterranean passage, leading from the castle to the seashore, the existence of which was unknown even to the inmates of the castle, and which this w—— had discovered and used to facilitate her scandalous intrigue with Admiral Nelson. By this underground passage, in the greatest secrecy, Lady Hamilton herself, during the seven nights which elapsed between December 14 and 21, conveyed sixty millions in jewels belonging to the King, and enormous sums said to be worth twenty millions. Then, escorted by Nelson and a number of his men, the King and Queen, with the members of their family, their ministers, escaped on December 21 before daybreak and went on board Admiral Nelson's vessel. On the 23rd they sailed, and reached Palermo on the 25th."

General Thiébault, who entered Naples after taking an active part in the struggle that marked the entrance of the French into this city, had received accurate information, except on the head of Emma's love affairs, which had no need of the subterranean passage, and on the score of the millions which they were supposed to have carried away. This last point is rectified by an account which Nelson sent in to his superior, Lord St Vincent: "Lady Hamilton from this time to the 21st, every night received the jewels of the Royal Family, etc. etc. and such clothes as might be necessary for the very large party to embark, to the amount, I am confident, of full two millions five hundred thousand pounds sterling." (*Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 210.)

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 213.

notice that they would find refuge on any vessel in the squadron. The King and Queen, Acton, the Hamiltons, and all that remained of this dissolute and shattered monarchy, were on board the flagship.

It was the end of December, and furious winds detained the fleet. The magistrates of the town, the nobility, the people sent a deputation to the King, begging him to return, and promising to make the utmost efforts against the enemy. To one of the envoys, the Archbishop of Naples, the King replied by an absolute refusal. He let his Ministers receive the other deputies, and then the vessel sailed. One of the royal children, Prince Albert, aged seven, was ailing. Referring to him, his mother wrote to her daughter in Vienna: "I doubt that we shall all arrive alive. . . . I tremble for my son Albert."*

This sad presentiment was to be fulfilled. The child died during the passage, in spite of the efforts of Lady Hamilton, "who," says Colletta, "took great care of him and held him in her arms until he breathed his last."

This testimony is all the more valuable as it comes from an enemy. No doubt it may seem astonishing that Emma Lyon should bestow on a child that did not belong to her the care she had withheld from her own. But it must be remembered that the child whom she watched through its death-throes was the son of a Queen, and that she was surrounded by witnesses of the highest rank, who, with the usual exaggeration common to drawing-rooms and Courts, fell into ecstasies over the heroic devotion of the Ambassadress. Since she loved romantic adventures, she ought indeed to have felt happy, for she was in the very thick of stirring events. Had she not reason to rejoice when she considered her position! War had been declared. The King and Queen, her friends, had fled before the invasion threatening their Kingdom and the Revolution about to break out in their capital. The conqueror of the Nile, her lover, was protecting them all on his flagship, and taking them to Sicily!

* Quoted by von Helfert in *Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 514.

However, this new Attitude assumed by Lady Hamilton may perhaps be accounted for by the emotional nature natural to women, and it is possible that in the midst of misfortune Emma recovered, if only for one short day, feminine virtues which she had long forgotten; and who can tell but that, as she nursed the little Prince, her thoughts went out towards the daughter she had abandoned and sacrificed to her marriage.

CHAPTER VIII

The fugitives' perilous voyage—Their arrival at Palermo—The revolution at Naples—The installation of the Republican Government—Speech of Carlo Laubert—Denunciation of Marie-Caroline and Lady Hamilton—French reverse—Cardinal Ruffo—The army of Santá-Fé—Ruffo offers the Neapolitan Forts an honourable surrender—This is accepted.

THE stormy, wintry weather made the voyage a dangerous one, and more than once Nelson himself feared that the flagship and its freight of royal fugitives would sink. In this critical state of affairs, Hamilton conducted himself with characteristic calmness and courage, and once he was found holding a loaded pistol in each hand without any apparent emotion. "In answer to her Ladyship's exclamation of surprise, he calmly told her that he was resolved not to die with the 'guggle-guggle-guggle' of the salt-water in his throat; and therefore he was prepared, as soon as he felt the ship sinking, to shoot himself."*

In a letter written to Greville, Lady Hamilton thus related the hardships they underwent during the flight: "We arrived on Christmas Day at night, after having been near lost, a tempest that Lord Nelson had never seen for thirty years he has been at sea the like . . . and poor I to attend and keep up the spirits of the Queen, the Princess Royall, 3 young princesses, a baby six weeks old, and 2 young princess Leopold and Albert, the last six years old, my favourite, taken with convulsion in the midst of the storm, and at 7 in the evening of Christmas day, expired in my arms, not a

* Captain Smyth's letter quoted by Pettigrew, vol. i, p. 178.

soul to help me, as the few women her Majesty brought on board were incapable of helping her or the poor Royal children. Thank God we have got our brave Lord Nelson. The King and Queen and the Sicilians adore, next to worship him, and so they ought; for we shoud not have had this Island, but for his glorious victory. He is calld here *Nostro Libertore, nostro Salvatore.* We have left every thing at Naples but the vases and best pictures, 3 houses elegantly furnished, all our horses and our 6 or 7 carriages I think is enough for the vile French."*

At length, on December 27, Nelson was able to land the unhappy royal fugitives, further bereaved by the death of their child. It is easy to imagine what torture those tragic days inflicted on the proud Sovereigns, on the descendant of Louis XIV and on the daughter of Maria-Theresa, who believed so firmly in their own Absolute Right. In their hearts they nurtured fierce plans of revenge, and their sufferings must not be forgotten when apportioning the responsibility for what occurred after the return from Palermo, when a long-contained fury at length burst forth.

Fully expecting to be robbed of Sicily, the Queen showed a fine courage. Her one idea was to save her children by sending them to Austria. She herself was quite prepared for death. "Ensuite le reste rester," she said, "le Roi, moi, mon fils, a mourir ou nous sauver, mais je désirerais mes enfants sauvés."†

The companions of her exile took a less tragic view of the situation. Had not this opportune Revolution united them all! Love, confidence, friendship; Nelson, Emma, Hamilton were gathered together under the same roof and lived in perfect harmony. To his honour, it must be said that the Admiral was growing weary of this enforced inaction. He used his leisure to draw up a codicil in favour of the Hamiltons, so great was his

* Morrison MSS. 370, January 7, 1799.

† Quoted by von Helfert in *Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 543.

admiration for them, as Mr Walter Sichel remarks with charming naivete. To Emma he bequeathed the diamonds given him by the Sultan's mother, and to Sir William he left fifty guineas.* This ridiculous legacy was left to Hamilton so that the more important gift made by a married man to a married woman might be overlooked. This first codicil was, in course of time, to be followed by several others.

As for Emma, she was now not only the wife of the Ambassador, but she was acting as Ambassador, Minister, General: she was happy, for she was all-important, and had a hand in everything. On May 20 the Queen wrote to her: "I beg you to inform me why Keith is come and what force he brings, and if the French and Spanish squadron has left, and where it is."†

Queen Marie-Caroline considered that it was imperative for the British fleet to remain and defend Sicily. Six or eight thousand Frenchmen had sufficed to conquer Naples. One thousand could easily take possession of Sicily. On January 15, 1799, Nelson wrote to Lord St Vincent: "Both the King and Queen have so seriously pressed me not to move, that I cannot do it; they have fears, and have confidence in me, for their safety."‡

"Nothing could console the Queen this night, but my promise not to leave them unless the battle was to be fought off Sardinia." (May 12, 1799.)

"What a state I am in! If I go, I risk, and more

* For a memorial ring.

† Pettigrew, vol. i, page 224. Her head was quite turned by the Queen's favour, and the importance it gave her in the eyes of those about her. On the envelope of a letter which Marie-Caroline wrote to her on July 2, she traced these words: "This from my friend whom I love and adore. Yess, I will serve her with my heart and soul my blood if necessary shall flow for her. Emma will prove to Maria Carolina that an humble born Englishwoman can serve a Queen with real and true love, even at the risk of her life." Eg. MSS. 1616, folio 38.

‡ *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 234.

than risk, Sicily, and what is now safe on the Continent . . . As I stay, my heart is breaking."* (May 13.)

Concerning Naples and the blockade, the Queen wrote to the Emperor that these plans must be abandoned for the present and all efforts concentrated on saving Sicily.

However excellent her reasons may have appeared to the Queen, they did not convince Nelson. He seemed so uncertain, and so fearful of making a decision, that in order to persuade him to remain, Lady Hamilton had to have recourse to all her caressing wiles, so says von Helfert,† who may be relied on, as he is an ardent defender of the Admiral.

On May 17 the Queen announced that the French fleet had passed the Straits of Gibraltar. The British squadrons under Bridport and St Vincent had failed to intercept the enemy. At this juncture, instead of pushing forward with all his forces, Nelson divided his fleet, he himself remaining at Palermo with one British and one Portuguese vessel. The Queen had been right in her hesitations; but it is more probable that Lady Hamilton's voice alone had persuaded him to remain on in Sicily!

More than once Marie-Caroline proved that she was possessed of sound judgment, and her *confidante*, who delighted in meddling with things that did not concern her, could also give good advice occasionally. Thus, fearing that the Republicans might invade Sicily, she pointed out to Lord St Vincent that it would be advisable to place a British garrison in Messina. That the honour of inspiring this move is due to her initiative, may be gathered from the answer that St Vincent sent to one of her letters: "My dear Lady Hamilton, I forwarded the letter your Ladyship committed to my care . . . and I have sent expresses to London *via* Lisbon to apprize our Government of the critical state of the island of Sicily. I heartily hope that General Stuart will

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, pp. 354-355.

† *Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 249.

arrive in time to secure Messina."* Sir Charles Stuart landed a thousand infantry in Messina. According to the Queen's own confession, the Court of Palermo had no more soldiers. "The troops sent to Messina," she wrote, "saved this important port, the fall of which would have carried with it the remainder of the Kingdom."†

The Revolution had triumphed in Naples. On June 11, 1799, Mack had retired behind the lines of Regni-Lagni and the Ofanto, and an armistice had been concluded whereby the Kingdom of Naples was to pay eight millions to the French Republic. The Neapolitans, not understanding such negotiations, regarded as false to their country those who were responsible for them. When Arcambal, chief *ordonnateur* of the army, arrived to levy the war indemnity, a riot broke out, and Prince Pignatelli-Belmonte, whom Ferdinand had appointed Governor, was obliged to fly, leaving the city in the hands of the mob.

The French then marched on Naples. The people defended their city with great courage. "The Lazzaroni are heroes," said Championnet, in his official report. General Thiébault has also related how difficult it was to overcome their desperate resistance and drive them back, street by street, house by house. Nevertheless, their courage could not prevail over the practised skill and discipline of the French troops. On January 23, Championnet entered Naples and, according to the custom then practised by the French, proclaimed the Parthenopean Republic. On the following day, a public ball was given in the prior's room at the Convent of San Martino.

Whilst his lieutenants set out to conquer the rest of the Kingdom, Championnet established a temporary Government composed of twenty-five members, which came into force on January 26. It was generally believed that the Bourbons had gone for ever, and in his opening

* Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 209.

† *Correspondance du Marquis de Gallo.* No. 323.

speech Carlo Laubert, who presided over the new Government, did not spare the Queen, whom he branded as a new Messalina. "It appears then to this fury vomited by the North, that she may with ease tear out from this soil the germs of liberty. She sets ablaze the torch of fanaticism, she organises an army of spies; but she merely hastens her own ruin and our regeneration. All the evils which this new Alecto has brought on a country to which she does not belong—the ruin of finance, the depraving of morals, ignorance and barbarity carried in triumph—have aroused the indignation of the nation."

It is but natural that the Queen's friend should not escape the angry outburst of public feeling. The *Monitore Napoletano* recalled the part played by Lady Hamilton in helping the Sovereigns to escape: "When everything was ready for flight, Admiral Nelson, Hamilton, the British Ambassador and his celebrated wife—better known as the accomplice of Marie-Caroline's intrigues—consulted together as to the plan of operations to be followed on the flight . . . They debated as to what artifice to employ to persuade to fly the muddle-headed Ferdinand, the imbecile whose stupidity kept him always in a state of indecision."*

The King was far from pleased to read such articles at Palermo; but it was through the newspapers that he was enlightened concerning his wife's conduct, which up to that date he had not suspected. Stormy scenes took place between the two, which account for the fact that when the King returned to Naples he left the Queen in Sicily. Highly incensed by the revelations brought to light in the newspapers, and furious with the Neapolitans who had read them, Marie-Caroline vowed she would be revenged. She achieved her purpose in the bloody executions that followed and to which Lady Hamilton lent a willing hand. She was to persuade Nelson to undertake this task, just as Anthony avenged the wrongs of Cleopatra.

* *Monitore Napoletano*, February 12, 1799.

Unforeseen events prevented the Republic from taking root in Naples. War broke out once more between France and Austria. Turkey, having been threatened by Buonaparte, joined the coalition, which was considerably strengthened by the great Russian general, Souwaroff, who defeated the French at Magnano. Moreau, who was in command in the valley of the Po, called the Neapolitan army to his assistance. It was then under the command of Macdonald, who had succeeded Championnet when the latter was recalled.* Macdonald abandoned Naples, leaving behind him a small detachment commanded by Colonel Méjean. These forces would have sufficed had the Parthenopean Republic been firmly established; but, as it was, the French were then struggling with a clever and dangerous enemy, Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo.

Denizio Fabrizio Ruffo was born at San Lucido, near Paolo, in Calabria, on September 16, 1744. He belonged to that hybrid class of Cardinals who had not taken Holy Orders — an anomaly that occurred frequently in those days. Mazarin belonged to this order, and Rafaello just escaped being enrolled in it. Ruffo had acted as treasurer to Pope Pius VI. Later, he had been appointed Governor-General of the King's palace at Caserta. At the time of the royal escape to Palermo he had volunteered to raise Calabria, his native province, against the Republic. He was sent there with " a few men and still less money; unlimited authority and great promises."† His success was instantaneous amidst a

* Botta gives a singular reason for Championnet's disgrace. The General was making preparations for an expedition into Sicily. This did not fit in with the plans of Talleyrand who, believing a restoration possible, did not wish to exasperate the Bourbons. It must be remembered that Championnet had made a great mistake in causing Faypoult to be ejected from Naples. Championnet was arrested in France, then released and put in command of the army of Italy. He was defeated at Genola, and died of grief in 1800.

† *Storia del reame di Napoli dal* 1734 *al* 1825 by Colletta, vol. iv, ch. ii.

CARDINAL RUFFO
From a bust in the Museum of San Martino

fanatical population that hated the French and the Republicans. He soon found himself at the head of an army of peasants, with which he marched upon Naples. "He advanced slowly so that the sight of the rich city might the better excite the greedy covetousness of his horde of followers, to whom he had promised the plunder of the town. At dawn on June 13, having erected an altar in the midst of the camp, and having celebrated Mass* and implored the help of St Anthony, he mounted his horse and, clothed in purple and bearing a sword, led the troops of Santa-Fé† against the City."‡

It has been said that Ruffo placed his army under the protection of St Anthony, because the legendary patron of Naples, San Gennaro, had become unpopular amongst the troops of Santa-Fé by consenting to perform his celebrated miracle for the benefit of the French.§ This is quite possible with people who consider the saints as living beings, and converse familiarly with them, who, when they have a favour to ask of one of them, rap on the shrine—(this we have witnessed ourselves)—in order to attract the attention of the heavenly host. But it will be noticed that whatever may have been the motives that caused Ruffo to forego the protection of San Gennaro, no very serious reasons guided him in his choice of a new patron. He simply chose the first that figured in the

* As Pepe remarks, it would be more correct to say he *caused* Mass to be said, for he was not a priest.

† He had given this name to his army.

‡ See Colletta, vol. iv, ch. iii.—The Cardinal denied having ever promised that his army should plunder the city, as Colletta asserted. On the contrary, Ruffo expressed "his grief at not having been able to stop the bloodshed and pillage committed by the wild mob in the capital. He had found himself in very critical circumstances and, moreover, the greater part of his army was in sympathy with the lower classes." *Memorie storiche sulla vita del cardinale Fabrizio Ruffo*, by Sacchinelli Naples, Carlo Cattaneo, 1836, p. 226.

§ See *Souvenirs*, by Maréchal Macdonald, p. 72, *Mémoires*, by Général Thiebault, vol. ii, p. 504.

calendar.* For a time St Anthony, who had worked a new miracle by quelling the Revolution in Naples, became the favourite of this superstitious people. A print of the time depicts the miraculous appearance of the glorious St Anthony of Padua at Naples on June 13, 1799. It is very roughly drawn, and represents the soldiers of Santa-Fé with crosses on their caps. They are as stiff as wooden dolls, and are supposed to be pursuing the flying republicans. A very simplified panorama of Naples occupies the background of the picture, and St Anthony is seen flying in the skies above his troops, holding a white banner with three fleur-de-lis.

On June 14 the Cardinal entered Naples; but the struggle was not yet over. The city possessed three castles, which still exist. Torre Nuovo and Uovo are on the seashore; St Elmo rises above the city, which is built like an amphitheatre. The two first named were in the hands of the Republicans; the third was occupied by the detachment left behind by Macdonald. The question was how were these three little fortresses to be overcome?

"Although the chances of success were on Ruffo's side, he was not without anxiety concerning a prolonged resistance. He feared that Naples would soon be nothing but a heap of stones. . . He also feared that in spite of their superior numbers, his troops might lose their warlike ardour should victory be long delayed. He thought of treating with the rebels and offering them honourable terms. He revealed his intentions to Méjean, the French Colonel, who was entrenched in St Elmo. This officer whose attitude appeared most suspicious, and who was accused of having sold himself to the Royalists,† hastened

* This is also the opinion of Pepe, who considers that San Gennaro was *caduto di eredito presso la plebe*. (*Memorie intorno alla sua vita.*)

† This accusation is, unfortunately, only too well founded. The undeniable proof of his treachery is to be found in two letters which the Queen addressed to Lady Hamilton on July 7 and 8. (See *La Reine Marie-Caroline de Naples* by Gagnière, pp. 171-172.)

to communicate the official proposal to the arbiters of the Republic.*

The Lazzaroni and the soldiers of Santa-Fé were not likely to appreciate Ruffo's prudence. They soon began to declare that he was turning into a Jacobin. But he remained steadfast, and on June 23 obtained the surrender of Castles Uovo and Nuovo. St Elmo still held out; nevertheless Méjean had been party in the treaty, for the Neapolitan Directors had declared they would not trust King Ferdinand or his Vicar General only.† Thus all the belligerents were involved in the treaty: on the one side the French; on the other the Russians, the Turks, and the English, and the allies of the King of Naples. The English troops, who were to be engaged

* See Bonnefons, ch. v, *La République Parthénopienne*. Speaking of Méjean, Francisco Pignatelli says: "Nearly all the members of the Neapolitan Government, all the generals, all the personages who were remarkable for their virtue or talent, perished at Naples by the treachery of the Austrian shrew and the murderous Admiral. Méjean might have saved many worthy lives had he exacted the execution of the treaty which he had confirmed and vouched for." (*Apercu historique complementaire du Mémoire du Général Bonnamy sur la guerre entre la République Francaise et le roi de Naples et sur la Révolution qui en fut la suite*, by F. Pignatelli, Brigadier General in the Italian army. Berne, Year VIII.) Whatever may have been Méjean's personal sentiments, it is difficult to form a judgment on this point. No doubt, he might have protested against the violation of the treaty and have bombarded the city; but isolated as he was, he could not have held out for any length of time, and, morally, he had no influence at all. Besides, he had been warned that each cannon fired on the town, would cost the life of one of the 1500 French prisoners on board the British vessels. (*Diario*, Archives of Naples.) On July 11 he surrendered. On this subject Botta, ch. xviii, may be consulted. The *Mémoires* of Général Thiébault contain an interesting account concerning General Bonnamy, who was fond of running with the hare whilst hunting with the hounds; he also remarks that no importance should be attached to his *Coup d'oeil sur les opérations de la campagne de Naples*.

Maréchal Macdonald's *Souvenirs* concerning this campaign are also full of errors which are not always involuntary ones.

† See Micheroux's letter to Ruffo in *Proclami et Sanzioni della republica napoletana*, Naples 1863.

in suppressing the Revolutionists, were under the command of Captain Foote, one of Nelson's officers. The presence of representatives of four different nations gave exceptional importance to the treaty. The principal condition was that Republicans should be allowed to return unmolested to France.

As, in spite of Ruffo's protests, Nelson violated this treaty, the principal features must be given here.

Article 2. The troops composing the garrisons shall keep possession of their forts until the vessels which shall be spoken of hereafter, destined to convey such as are desirous of going to Toulon, are ready to sail. The evacuation shall not take place until the moment of embarkation.

Article 3. The garrisons shall march out with the honours of war, etc., etc.*

Drawn up at Castel Nuovo, 19th June 1799.

Signed: Massa, Commander of Castle Nuovo.

Signed: L'Aurora, Commander of Castle Uovo.

Signed: Fabrizio, Cardinal Ruffo, Vicar General of the Kingdom of Naples.

Signed: Antonio, Chev. Micheroux, Minister plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies attached to the Russian Forces.

Signed: E. J. Foote, Commander of His Majesty the King of England's vessel, the *Seahorse*.

Signed: Baillie, Commander of the troops of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias.

Signed: Acmet, Commander of the Ottoman troops.

In pursuance with the decision taken by the Council of War held at San Elmo on the 3rd Messidor, following the letter of General Massa, commander of Castle Nuovo,

* *Dispatches*, app. vol. iii, p. 487.

date 1st Messidor, the commander of San Elmo sanctions the present capitulation.

Fort San Elmo.

This 3rd Messidor, Year VII of the French Republic.
(June 21, 1799.)

Signed: MEJEAN.

Although Lady Hamilton took no part in these events, they must be related, as she has been accused of having been concerned in them, and of having soiled her hands with bloodshed. This, however, has been contested; but as everybody gave orders in this Kingdom except the King himself, as revolution raged and a veritable anarchy presided, the guilty have endeavoured to evade the severe criticism of history, and still find champions who, however, are more or less discomfited by the odious cause they defend. It is therefore necessary to examine very closely all the documentary evidence in order to ascertain the share of responsibility that attaches to each, and the extenuating or aggravating circumstances which must be taken into consideration by impartial posterity.

* Quoted from Cacciatore and the *Proclami e Sanzioni della republica napoletana* which give the most complete signatures.

In M. Bonnefon's work, the signatures differ somewhat, but the text is identical. Following the copy in the British Museum, Mr Gutteridge enumerates the following names only, Méjean, Ruffo, Foote, and two names which are not to be found anywhere else : Ru Magrouse Syeninoue Sourine, and Kuburissu Stere. He admits that these names must have been mis-spelt by the copyist.

CHAPTER IX

The breaking of the treaty—The English school and the responsibility of Lady Hamilton—Detractors and defenders—The accounts of Sacchinelli and Cacciatore—The arrival of Nelson—His personal opposition to the treaty—Reasons for this attitude—Discussions between him and Ruffo—Protest of the signatories of the treaty—Ruffo's offer—Nelson pretends to yield—New difficulties—Evacuation of the forts—Letters from Palermo—The Queen and Lady Hamilton—Ruffo threatened—Nelson breaks the treaty—His proclamation—Nelson and the English Government—The treaty and the Armistice—The historical theory of von Helfert and Gutteridge—The Queen and Cardinal Ruffo.

COLLETTA relates that "when Queen Caroline was informed in Palermo that the castles had capitulated, she saw that her chance of revenge had slipped from her hands." Then follows a dramatic and glowing account: Nelson had just started for Naples: the Queen forced Lady Hamilton to hasten after him, charging her to beg him to break a treaty that was incompatible with the prerogatives and dignity of the Crown. No King could treat with rebel subjects! At first Nelson refused to listen to this dishonourable counsel, but finally succumbed to the pleadings of the woman he loved—the "fatal woman." Yielding to this detestable influence, he broke the treaty, and, by preventing the execution of the principal clause which authorised the unmolested departure of the Republicans, delivered them up to Ferdinand's executioners.*

This explanation of the violation of the treaty was, at first, generally accepted, particularly in England. Since the great man had committed an infamous action, an explanation, an excuse had to be found, and the

* Colletta, vol. v, ch. i.

excuse lay in the Admiral's passionate love for the beautiful Emma. From the very onset, this school found many adherents. As long as Nelson lived, Captain Foote, whom Nelson blamed for having signed the treaty, did not dare to defend himself, for, in his eyes, Emma was the guilty one and he could not accuse the mistress before the lover. But after the Admiral's death, Foote immediately published a vindication of his conduct,* in which he attributed the rupture of the treaty to *female vengeance, aided by female insinuation*—in other words, to the revengeful Queen, aided by Lady Hamilton's intrigues. It was a current report,† and Foote was sincere when he helped to spread it. So it was generally admitted that, like Hercules lying in bonds at Omphale's feet, Nelson had given way to the infamous suggestions whispered to him by his mistress. "The greatest naval hero that either England or any other country ever produced, was, by an unaccountable fatality, *persuaded* to annul the capitulation! I say persuaded, for I will never be brought to believe, for an instant, that the magnanimous, humane, and enlightened Lord Nelson, would have committed such an act, if the officious and insidious agency of those around him, had not been most improperly exerted."‡

* *Captain Foote's vindication of his conduct*, etc., 1807.

† In the *Annale d'Italia dal* 1750, (Rome 1829), vol. iii, 1799, Coppi says: "Il Cardinale Ruffo che avrebbe voluto sostenere la capitolazione divenne quasi sospetto a coloro che la violarono, a Nelson non sicuro punto di far valere quanto aveva approvato il suo subalterne Food (sic). Declamarono percio i patrioti essere esso, stato indotto nell' indifferenza dai vezzi di Lady Hamilton a tal uopo cola diretta della Regina Carolina." Coppi was an Anti-republican and his work was published in Rome *with approval*. No further comment is required.

‡ *Letters from the Mediterranean* by Blaquière, p.505. Mr Walter Sichel attributes Nelson's action to his care for the interests of his country—a somewhat weak explanation: "That what really decided Nelson's movement was the dearest wish of his heart—the honour and interest of Great Britain. After suppressing the enemies of all authority and order, he still hoped to fall in with the long-hunted French fleet, and to deal a death blow to the universal enemy." Mr Walter Sichel, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

These sentiments are most noble and do honour to the Englishman who uttered them. But, as will be seen later on, Nelson was neither magnanimous or humane. He was a brilliant man; he had sudden flashes of genius, but he had no understanding of those elevated sentiments, generosity and mercy, which exalt the conqueror.

Defenders also rose up to vindicate Emma, who had been made responsible for Nelson's fault. As she had done no glorious deeds that might plead for her, her beauty remained her sole defence. It seems that even after death this woman could turn the heads of all who approach her. Like Helen, Cleopatra, Marie-Antoinette, Mme Récamier, she counts more lovers now than during her life-time. She is surrounded by worshippers. She has called forth fanatical admiration, as in the case of Mrs Gamlin, who goes so far as to compare her to Joan of Arc. When a writer falls into such excesses, he has lost all sense of criticism or history, and substitutes his own private feelings for facts. By a very simple method, Mrs Gamlin hopes to circumvent the reader's convictions. She simply cuts out of Emma's life a period which she would have some difficulty in setting in a good light, namely the Revolution in Naples. Mrs Gamlin possesses intimate knowledge of the first and last years of her heroine's life, and many details concerning her stay at Naples up to the Revolution, but she suppresses entirely Nelson's arrival in Italy, the beginning of their *liaison*, the Parthenopean Republic, its fall and the counter-Revolution. The reader skips from the flight to Palermo (December, 1798) to Caracciolo's execution, June 29, 1799. This is no longer history, but the method of a lawyer who defends his client by suppressing part of the truth.

According to another school, headed by the Austrian von Helfert, author of *Königin Karolina* and *Fabrizio Ruffo*, and the Englishman Gutteridge in his *Nelson and the Neapolitan Jacobins*, Lady Hamilton can be left entirely out of the question, as being of no importance,

whereas Nelson simply fulfilled his duty by executing the King's wishes in spite of Ruffo, who betrayed him. These authors have gathered their opinions from a great number of documents. In fact, there is not much information that has escaped Mr Gutteridge's attention. But preconceived ideas have led them astray. They mitigate or pass over in silence facts which are against their theory, on the other hand enlarging upon those which support their views. It is, therefore, necessary to take up each one of their assertions, showing which is well founded and which is false.

Two precious accounts exist, written almost at the very time of the counter-Revolution. The authors were not Liberals, but staunch upholders of the Bourbons. These works are *Memorie storiche sulla vita del cardinale Fabrizio Ruffo*, by Sacchinelli, former secretary to the Cardinal,* and *Esame della storia del Reame di Napoli*, by Cacciatore, who, however, nearly always copies Sacchinelli. It will be seen how these two friends of Absolute Power have judged Nelson's attitude; at the same time the reader will determine whether Messrs von Helfert and Gutteridge invalidate their statements.

According to Cacciatore, Ruffo was overwhelmed with joy at the conclusion of the capitulation, and on June 22 sent Captain Foote with the news to the King, together with a minute account of his operations. But, on the morning of the 24th, Nelson arrived with his fleet. The King had sent him to help Ruffo who, in his last letter, dated June 17, had declared that the situation was becoming difficult. As he had written on the 17th, Ruffo naturally could not mention the capitulation,† which

* By stating that Sacchinelli was merely an assistant and not really secretary, Mr Gutteridge believes that he lessens the importance of Sacchinelli's testimony.

† Mr Gutteridge maintains that Ruffo was very much put out, as the treaty, which was too favourable to the Republicans, had been drawn up by Micheroux with imprudent haste. Finding himself thus involved, and yet not wishing to disown Micheroux, Ruffo feared, on the other

was not yet concluded. Therefore Nelson had not received any orders in view of such a contingency, but he knew the Court meant to be merciless, and he was quite in agreement with the Court.* Nelson was accompanied by the Ambassador and his wife. As Hamilton had lived so many years in Naples, the King had begged him to accompany Nelson, who was not acquainted with the language of the army. As for Lady Hamilton, under pretext of accompanying her husband, she followed her lover. Moreover, as Marie-Caroline wrote to her every day, she represented the Queen's views.†

As soon as Nelson was acquainted with the terms of the treaty, he declared that he would not recognise it. Such an attitude was strange on the part of a foreign

hand, that Ferdinand might disown him. This explains the singular fact that for four days, from June 17 to 21, Ruffo did not communicate with the King. On the contrary, in a memorandum (*compendio*) which is in the Archives of Naples, Micheroux maintains that he "received the draft of a capitulation only *ad referendum*" but that to his surprise, "whether owing to the Cardinal's anxiety to relieve the city from an alarming situation, or whether because of the vivacity of his character, or finally on account of his dreading the arrival of the enemy's fleet, he signed the draft just as it was." (Gutteridge 41, p. 109). This took place on June 19. But Méjean did not sign until the 21st. This accounts for Ruffo not having written until the 22nd. He wished to be able to tell the King that all resistance had ceased.

* As Nelson had no written orders, Gutteridge supposes that the Admiral followed the Queen's orders, which she had made known in a letter to Ruffo, written on June 21. "You may treat with St Elmo, which is in the hands of the French, but unless the other two castles surrender immediately and unconditionally at the intimation of Admiral Nelson, they will be taken by force and treated at they deserve." But it will be noticed that in his discussion with the Cardinal, Nelson did not put forward any such instructions.

† Sir William wrote to Lord Grenville: "Lady Hamilton was very particularly requested by the Queen of Naples to accompany me and Lord Nelson on this expedition, and was charged by Her Majesty with many important commissions in Naples, and to keep up a regular correspondence with Her Majesty." (July 14). Gutteridge No. 159. p. 317.

leader, who had received no orders, and had not taken any part in the brilliant campaign whereby the Kingdom had been reconquered.* But Nelson joined the strife with a preconceived idea, and a stubborn purpose of which he was soon to give terrible proof. The bitter, almost morbid hatred which he entertained for the French† and the Republicans made it impossible for him to face a compromise. In order to understand Sacchinelli and Cacciatore's accounts, it is necessary only to study Nelson's features.

The Queen's pleadings, and the fear not wholly unfounded, that Sicily might be attacked and conquered, had detained Nelson at Palermo, but he had deeply and sincerely bemoaned his enforced inaction. It is natural and honourable that a warrior should long to be in the thick of the fight, and in this respect Nelson deserves all praise. But he did not long so passionately only for

* On June 13, says M. Fauchier Magnan, "Nelson appeared before the rebel city, endowed with discretionary power to chastise the guilty, and to ensure the success of the cause of the Bourbons. He was much surprised to hear that Ruffo had concluded a definite armistice with the French troops and the Neapolitan rebels. Furious at having been robbed of his chance of revenge, he returned at once to Palermo, and had no difficulty in involving the King in his own disappointment." (pp. 212-213). These lines contain a serious error, and the source from which the author drew his information must have been inexact. Gutteridge, who is very well informed, states that on June 13, Nelson left Palermo with the Crown Prince. The dispatches which he received at sea from Keith, made him fear the approach of the combined fleets of France and Spain, so he returned at once and re-appeared at Palermo on June 14, *to the great dismay and surprise of the Court.* Therefore it was not possible for him to be in Naples on the 14th. Had he arrived on the 13th he would have taken part in the battle which was fought on that day. Until June 20, he continued to cruise along the coast of Sicily, and although he was still on the look-out for the enemy's fleet, on receiving letters from Acton and Hamilton (see Gutteridge Nos. 54, 55), he decided to set sail for Naples. On June 24, he wrote to Hamilton that he would return in a week. (Gutteridge 56). Finally he took Hamilton and his wife on board.

† He admitted it himself, and as an excuse, said he had inherited it from his mother. (Fauchier Magnan.)

the battle with its dangers and glory; he did not long only to lay down his life for his country in wild frenzy of the struggle:

Oeil pour oeil, dent pour dent, c'est bien! hommes contre hommes!

Nelson longed above all to crush the impious sect against which he nourished a fierce and bitter hatred. At the age of twelve he had entered the navy. His education was very incomplete, and he knew no foreign language, for although he had learnt French, he did not know enough to be of use to him in conversation. He knew little about history, and still less of philosophy. The Rights of Man, or rather the Rights of Humanity, did not exist for him. He recognised but one power in the world, that of God. He had never got any further than the narrow sectarian teachings of Burnham Thorpe.* In his opinion the French were Papists, the Republicans all atheists, and both abandoned by God as being like unto beasts, unworthy, not only of all pity, but of all consideration. For him they did not exist. On the contrary, he considered Kings as the chosen of God; they were right in all they did, and in all they thought. Nelson was so convinced of this that on all occasions he referred matters to King Ferdinand IV, although he knew him to be a fool, and that Emma called him "stupid." Thus, the mind of the clergyman's son coincided exactly with that of Marie-Caroline, whose views he knew most intimately, although he had not at that time received any special mission from her.

After the Battle of the Nile, Nelson certainly con-

* "Nelson is in many points a really great man, in others a baby." said Lord Minto. Speaking of Nelson, the French Ambassador Alquier said: "Nelson's only value lies in his knowledge of the sea; in every other respect he is the most insignificant and thoughtless of men" (*Archives du Min. des Aff. étr.*, fonds Naples, 129.) Although Clarke and MacArthur systematically praise their hero, they are obliged to admit that he was behind his age in some respects: "It may be noticed that Nelson had some old fashioned ideas, etc.," *Life of Nelson*, p. 182.

sidered himself to be God's instrument. This involved him in a conflict which really did not concern him, and from which he should have kept aloof if only for the sake of his own glory. It was very natural that he should regret having missed the battle at Naples; but the fortunate circumstance of his absence made him feel at ease, whereas, the battle being over, the conqueror might be called upon to act the part of a police agent or an executioner. Ruffo had recovered Naples. He could not be deprived of the honour due to him. At the same time, this honour entailed a heavy weight of responsibility.

Ruffo had to choose between pacification and harsh measures. If he chose to make use of gentle means, he, the Neapolitan, knew better than any other person how he could act best in the King's interests. The Englishman, who knew nothing about the Kingdom of Naples, and had but a very superficial knowledge of the nature and customs of its inhabitants, should not have forced himself into the place of the Italian. This would have occurred to any leader save the victor of Aboukir Bay. But Nelson, like a new Joshua, felt himself inspired by God and full of wisdom, although he examined nothing, weighed no circumstances and refused to accept any advice. He reprimanded Foote, who was obliged to excuse himself for having signed the treaty:* "I signed this capitulation lest on a reverse of fortune, or the arrival of the enemy's fleet, it might have been asserted that my refusal was the cause of such misfortunes as might occur, and because I considered that the Cardinal was acquainted with the will and intention of his sovereign."† Moreover, Foote had kept his chief informed of the negotia-

* When Foote summoned Revigliano and Castellamare to surrender, he gave the word of honour that the defeated troops should be treated as prisoners of war and that he would intercede for them with the King (see *Vindication*, pp. 155-156). Therefore, his intervention had been of great weight in the surrender of Naples.

† *Vindication*, p. 155.

tions that were pending, and had not concealed from him what had caused them. On June 18 he wrote: "In consequence of the very interesting news which the Count de Thurn and the Governor of Procida, sent me yesterday evening, relative *to the change in the destination of the squadron* under your command, I sent Captain Oswald to the Cardinal to represent the absolute necessity of getting possession of the Castles, even by granting very favourable Terms." And on June 20: "I make no doubt that the capitulation will be favourable to the Rebels, as the regular force employed against them is so small, and the destination of the French fleet is as yet unknown to us."

When Foote signed the draft, he did so under protest against anything that could be "contrary to the honour and rights of his sovereign and the British nation." But no explanation could satisfy Nelson, who had, moreover, always distrusted the Cardinal. On June 17, Hamilton wrote to him: "Your Lordship sees that what we suspected of the Cardinal Ruffo has proved true, and I dare say when the capitulation of Naples comes to this Court, their Sicilian Majesties' dignity will be mortified."* Nelson did not hesitate for one instant, and at his request Hamilton wrote in French to the Cardinal:

Lord Nelson begs me to inform your Eminence that he has received from Captain Foote, Commandant of the *Seahorse* frigate, a copy of the capitulation which your Eminence has seen fit to conclude with the Commandants of the castles of St Elmo, Nuovo, and dell' Uovo; that he disapproves entirely of these capitula-

* Add MSS. 34912, f. 3. See *Vindication* by Captain Foote, pp. 136-138. This was the general opinion. Nicola, a Neapolitan, who kept a diary, made this entry on June 25: "It is reported that the delay which has occurred in publishing the treaty is to be accounted for by the fact that His Majesty refuses to sanction the treating with rebels as though they were a powerful enemy. As a matter of fact this is but just; but the point is that the city must be saved from the evils which the despair of the insurgents might call down on it" (Archives of Naples).

tions, and that he is firmly resolved on no account to remain neutral with the respectable force which he has the honour to command; that he has sent to your Eminence Captains Troubridge and Ball, commandants of H.B. Majesty's vessels *Culloden* and *Alexander*. The Captains are fully acquainted with the sentiments of Lord Nelson, and will have the honour of explaining them to His Eminence. My Lord hopes that Cardinal Ruffo will agree with him, and that at daybreak to-morrow he will be able to act in concert with His Eminence.

Their objects must be the same, *i.e.*, to conquer the common foe, and to submit his rebellious subjects to the clemency of his Sicilian Majesty.

I have the honour, etc.,

W. Hamilton.

On board the *Foudroyant*, 24th June 1799, 5 P.M., in the Gulf of Naples.*

Ruffo was amazed when he received this letter. He was a strange man, who has been unfairly judged by the defeated party. Colletta† accuses him of having made "too great profit in a short time" when he was acting as treasurer to Pius VI. The accusation seems to be well-founded, for Sacchinelli, the Cardinal's own secretary, says that he was accused of "practising usury in the operations relating to the value of paper money,"‡ and that the Pope dismissed him from the treasury, although at the same time making him a Cardinal. Nevertheless, in the Neapolitan struggle, he displayed admirable energy. He was such a staunch upholder of the Absolute Right of Kings, that in order to defend and raise it up once more, he abandoned his calling; yet he proved that it is possible to believe in this principle without becoming its slave. It will be seen that his attitude became the more noble as that of Nelson grew more unworthy.

* Gutteridge, p. 205. Sacchinelli possessed the original document of which he published a facsimile.

† Colletta, vol. iv, ch. ii. ‡ See Sacchinelli, p. 13.

When Ruffo read Hamilton's letter, he first believed that Nelson was displeased because the surrender of the castles had been settled before his arrival.

The King had indeed written to the Cardinal telling him not to act before the arrival of the British fleet. But Ruffo, feeling that he was on the point of victory, had seized the opportunity, and left unheeded the over-prudent counsel of his sovereign. And he had acted wisely. Believing that a short verbal explanation would suffice to do away with any misunderstanding, the energetic Cardinal went on board the *Foudroyant*, where he met Nelson and the Hamiltons. He was willing to justify his conduct, admitting there was need for it. He declared he had hastened on the negotiations because he feared the arrival of the French and Spanish fleets. Finally, he stated that "the treaty of capitulation having been lawfully concluded, it must be observed religiously, or else they would be guilty of a flagrant breach of faith."

"Nelson listened in silence, but Hamilton, looking much annoyed (*in aria di risentimento*), delivered this maxim: "Kings do not treat with rebel subjects." Whereupon the Cardinal replied that a treaty might have been avoided, but that since it had been concluded, it was necessary to keep to it. Noticing, however, that Nelson approved of Hamilton's maxim, and that the matter was more serious than he had at first imagined, the Cardinal again reminded them that the representatives of the different Powers having intervened in the signing of the treaty, he could not give an answer on his own responsibility without having first consulted them. He therefore took his leave and returned ashore."*

* See Cacciatore, vol. i, p. 144. Gutteridge shares Ruffo's view that Nelson was jealous of the Cardinal's success: "Futhermore he was most anxious that his squadron should be the principal instrument in replacing Ferdinand on his throne." (*Nelson and the Neapolitan Jacobins.*) This jealousy, which sometimes arises between rival generals was, once more, the cause of disastrous results. Nelson could not help being

Ruffo then called together the foreign signatories. They all felt the same indignation, and entered a formal protest, declaring that the "treaty was useful, necessary and honourable to the King of the Two Sicilies and to his powerful allies since, without further bloodshed, this treaty put an end to a murderous civil and national war, facilitating the expulsion of the foreign troops common enemies of the Kingdom." This treaty having been solemnly signed by the representatives of the said powers, it would be an abominable breach of faith if it were not properly executed, or if it were violated. As they had definitely resolved to keep most religiously to the terms agreed on, they begged Nelson to recognise the treaty, making responsible before God any person who should dare to prevent its execution.* Thus Nelson was disavowed by all the powers, and even his own colleagues. The support of the signatories having reassured Ruffo, he sought to deal the finishing blow to Nelson's pretentions by informing him that, should he persist in his attitude, he, Ruffo, as commander of the army of Santa-Fé, would place the enemy in the position they occupied before the truce, and let the English begin the struggle again supported by their own forces only.†

In this defiance Ruffo in his turn went too far. Captains Troubridge and Ball again journeyed back and forth between the *Foudroyant* and Ponte Maddalena, where the

irritated by the sight of the man—and he a Cardinal—who had robbed him, the victorious Admiral, of the glory of conquering Naples. In a letter dated May 17, Hamilton wrote to Nelson, "*His Eminency was resolved to conquer Naples himself*," and he underlined these words. (Add. MSS. 34912 ff. 3-4.)

* See Sacchinelli, p. 251, Mr Gutteridge finds this manifesto "somewhat bombastic." It seems on the contrary that it was quite natural to make use of the strongest language in condemning the violation of the treaty, and that the signatories had every right to feel the indignation of which Sacchinelli speaks.

† Nelson's attitude is all the more inadmissible as the treaty had already been put into execution. Hostages had been delivered to Méjean. But as Mr Gutteridge says: "*this is by itself not a matter of great importance*."

Cardinal had his headquarters. At length, giving way to their pressing demands, Ruffo decided to make a concession, a fact the Italian historians have overlooked, but which is proved by a letter preserved in the British Museum. He actually consented to renew hostilities and annul the capitulation. This letter was first published by Mr Gutteridge, who, of course, was jubilant because Nelson's rival had yielded. It is not sufficient, however, to publish a document without explaining it. As the letter was written on June 25, at an unknown hour, Mr Gutteridge supposes that it was sent towards the end of the day, or, at least, "at a late hour." This does not seem probable as on the morning of the 26th Nelson accepted the treaty. He did so grudgingly but still he accepted it. A man such as he was not likely to forego an advantage offered him.

Therefore Ruffo had some other reason for yielding, as will be found in the following letter:

25th June 1799.

EXCELLENCY,

The letter to the castles will have gone by this time, and if there is any hope of their surrendering at discretion it may succeed, because they see the augmentation of force, and whenever they wish to attack, it will be well that they should find us in force to destroy them. I implore, then, your Excellency to land 1200 men, whom it would be well to place within striking distance of St Elmo. I therefore offer for their quarters my house, which is large and empty, situated at the Largo dello Spirito Santo; it is called the Palazzo della Bagnara, and is also out of range of shell fire. I mention this for the peace of mind of your soldiers. I hope your Excellency will grant me this favour, as hostilities have already taken place with St Elmo this evening, and there is no time to be lost.

I remain, etc.,

F. CARDINAL RUFFO."*

* Add. MSS. 34944 f. 238.

To every unbiassed mind, this letter explains why Ruffo made his offer, and why Nelson refused to consider it. He did not wish to recognise the treaty. The conferences which had taken place on the morning of the 25th, between his emissaries, Troubridge and Ball, and the Cardinal had been unproductive. So Ruffo concluded it would be better to renew hostilities. He was ready; let Nelson send him but 1200 men, and although he could not undertake the reduction of the two castles, he could at least resist the enemy's attacks. This state of affairs might last for a month or two. In the meantime, the French fleet might arrive, but that would be Nelson's look out. He did not want it to be said that he refused help to the allies. He regretted the statement that he had made on the previous day.* For five months he had been carrying on war, although he was no soldier. He could carry it on still longer. It was the cannon's turn to speak.

Nelson was assuming a terrible responsibility. He had already given proof that war possessed no terrors for him. His glorious wounds bore testimony to his splendid courage. But it was a momentous decision to annul a capitulation, and to renew hostilities with men who had already surrendered. How was Nelson to extricate himself from this complicated position? His intrigue with the wife of his friend and host had made falsehood and deceit habitual to him, and had eradicated all moral sense and those delicate sentiments, that fine flower of honour, which is only to be found in exalted souls. The latent weakness which slumbered in the great man's soul, suggested to him an atrocious thought. He would pretend to enter into the Cardinal's views, and thus entice the patriots into leaving the castles. Just as he had betrayed the trust placed in him by his friend, Nelson did not hesitate once more to deceive Hamilton, who endeavoured to make him alter his decision. He persuaded him that he shared his conciliatory

* Several documents prove that Ruffo refused to assist Nelson.

views, and thus, having gained his point, fell back upon his original determination, and relying on the wishes of the King, well known to him, annulled the treaty. Thus the very letter that Mr Gutteridge quotes as a proof of Ruffo's weakness bears witness, on the contrary, to the loyalty of the Cardinal and the treachery of Nelson, who neither accepted the offer nor referred to it. He had made up his mind to fight, and had he published Ruffo's letter, it would have been an acknowledgment that he alone wanted war.

He was not entirely unsupported, however, for Marie-Caroline did not wish any terms to be offered to the rebels, and she was opposed to a capitulation. Her plan was to exact an unconditional surrender, and to inflict the most terrible punishments on the defeated rebels.* She thirsted for bloodshed and torture. By refusing to respect the armistice, Nelson, who, as an Englishman, should have remained neutral during these negotiations, seems to have yielded to Lady Hamilton, the devoted friend of the Queen, whose power over him was supreme. Such dealings leave no trace behind them, because they are transacted by word of mouth, nevertheless, their influence is overwhelming.

However this may be, the negotiations came to an end, and both parties remained in their respective positions. Much to his credit, the Cardinal then made an effort to save the Republicans against whom he had fought with such energy, but whom he refused to hand over to their murderers. He wrote to them that they might leave by land, as Nelson was master of the sea.† Unfortunately

* See p. 201, note. No doubt when Captain Troubridge ordered the savage executions that took place at Procida, he was simply following the orders the Queen had made known to Nelson through Lady Hamilton, and which the Admiral had undertaken to fulfill.

† In his Introduction, Mr Gutteridge does not consider that this offer was genuine. He holds that it was a mere mockery. No doubt the Republicans would have left at their own risk and peril. They might very well have fallen into the hands of the fanatical hordes that scoured the campagna, or be taken by the royal police. But Ruffo had no other

this noble effort was misunderstood. The Republicans imagined that the man whom they knew to be their enemy was setting a trap for them, and, fearing that he might entertain the same sanguinary passions as his soldiers, they refused to depart.

Nevertheless, the Cardinal's admirable energy won the day, and Nelson at length yielded. But, according to Cacciatore and Sacchinelli, this was a mere subterfuge (*un inganno*):

He caused Hamilton to write the following note:

On board the *Foudroyant* in the Gulf of Naples.

June 26, 1799.

Your Eminence,

My Lord Nelson wishes me to inform you that he has decided to do nothing that might break the armistice, which your Eminence has granted to the Castles of Naples.

I am,

Your Eminence's humble servant,

W. Hamilton.

Nelson himself addressed the following words to Ruffo:

Sir,

I am just honoured with your Eminency's letter, and as His Excellency Sir William Hamilton has wrote you this morning, that I will not on any consideration break the Armistice entered into by you, I hope Your Eminency will be satisfied that I am supporting your ideas. I send you once more Captains Troubridge and Ball, to arrange with your Eminency everything relative to an attack on St Elmo, etc.*

chance to offer them, and, by making this last effort in their favour, he gave a remarkable proof of his feelings of humanity and straightforwardness. Nelson was incapable of understanding such feelings. It is a pity that his present champions should appreciate them as little as he did.

* Sacchinelli, p. 225. The note was written in French. Add. MSS. 34963, folio 104, *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 394.

Towards noon, Troubridge and Ball brought these letters to the Cardinal, and drew up a third declaration:

"Captains Troubridge and Ball are empowered by Lord Nelson to declare to your Eminence that he will not oppose the embarkation of the rebels, and garrison of Castles Nuovo and Uovo."*

The matter seemed to be settled; and yet difficulties still arose. After having drawn up this declaration, Troubridge refused to sign it, alleging that he and his colleague were instructed to treat military questions by word of mouth, and not to *write* on diplomatic questions. Although the Cardinal felt that they were not acting straightforwardly,† he did not care to have any further discussion with the two Captains, and instructed Micheroux to accompany them to the Republican leaders to discuss the carrying out of what had been agreed upon. The two castles surrendered, and the Cardinal, being satisfied, wrote thanking Nelson and Hamilton. In return he received an amiable answer from the Ambassador:

On board the *Foudroyant*, June 27, 1799.

EMINENCE,

It is with great pleasure that I receive your Eminence's note. We have all worked alike for the true welfare of His Sicilian Majesty and the good cause. Different characters have different ways of expressing themselves Praise be to God, all goes well, and I may assure your Eminence that Lord Nelson congratulates himself on the decision he has taken not to interrupt your Eminence's operations, but to assist you with all his power to put an end to the affair which your Eminence has so well conducted up to the present, in the very critical circumstances in which your Eminence found yourself.

* This note is in Italian. The fascimile is contained in Sacchinelli's work.

† Cacciatore, vol. i, p. 152.

My Lord and I are only too happy if we have been able to contribute a little to the service of their Sicilian Majesties, and to the tranquillity of your Eminence. My Lord begs me to thank your Eminence for your note, and to say that he will see to the provisions.

I have the honour, etc.

W. Hamilton.*

But whilst the Cardinal felt reassured by this letter and believed he had won the day, Nelson was shamefully deceiving him. In the first place, the honours of war promised by the treaty were not observed.† Then, those who surrendered were kept prisoners on board English vessels.‡ They complained to Ruffo who once more, and for the last time, sent Micheroux to Nelson begging him not to "sully his fame." It was in vain. Nelson and Hamilton stood their ground. The other representatives of the allied powers did not protest, and the treaty was rescinded.§ The French commander had four hostages at St Elmo, but, says honest Sacchinelli, "the French commander of St Elmo cared very little about the Neapolitan patriots."‖

Méjean's defection would suffice to confirm all the accusations brought against him, and which, as it has already been stated, were only too well founded, but in this circumstance he had been warned that the French prisoners would also be treated as hostages. The desertion of the powers is a far more astonishing fact. However, it must be remembered that at this moment news arrived from Ferdinand IV who, prompted by his

* Sacchinelli, p. 264.

† The Russian troops alone observed them.

‡ Mr Gutteridge maintains that Nelson had only promised Ruffo that the patriots should *embark*, not that they should be *free* to sail. None but a very weak cause can be defended by such arguments.

§ Cacciatore, vol. ii, p. 158.

‖ Sacchinelli, p. 264.

relentless consort, also refused to sanction the treaty.* Mr Gutteridge believes that three letters to this purpose reached Naples on June 28. The King wrote to Nelson; Queen Caroline to Lady Hamilton, and Acton to Sir William. Ferdinand's letter has disappeared, but the two others leave no room for doubt concerning the designs of the Court.

Writing to her friend, who had now become her principal minister,† the Queen said: "The sight of the brave English squadron is my hope. The garrison must first quit St Elmo, and be escorted by an envoy to Marseilles or Toulon, and without any baggage. The rebel patriots must lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion to the pleasure of the King. Then, in my opinion, an example should be made of some of the leaders of the representatives, and the others to be transported under pain of death . . . Finally, my dear Lady, I recommend Lord Nelson to treat Naples as if it were an Irish town in rebellion similarly placed . . . I recommend to you therefore, my dear Lady, the greatest firmness, vigour and severity."‡

On the strength of these orders whispered to him by his mistress, and urged on him by the two other letters he had received, Nelson decided to send to the scaffold

* On May 17, the Queen wrote to Gallo saying: "I still hope that the Austrians will take Naples again. In that event, I beg of you, to let there be no truce, no pardon, no agreements with our wretches. They must be punished—death for their leaders. Deportation for the others—I loathe Naples and—with the exception of the lowest classes—all her infamous inhabitants. A general massacre would not cause me the slightest grief." (*Correspondance avec Gallo*), Nos. 328.

† With the simplicity which he always displayed where his wife was concerned, Hamilton was obliged to admit that he knew less than she did as to the intentions of Nelson and the Queen: "As Lord Nelson is now telling Lady Hamilton what he wishes to say to the queen, you will probably know from the queen more than I do of Lord Nelson's intentions." (Gutteridge, No. 89.) And on June 28, Acton replied that he had seen the letter of Lady Hamilton wherein Lord Nelson's intentions were mentioned. (Gutteridge, No. 131.)

‡ Pettigrew, vol. i, p. 233. Acton's letter No. 100.

F. J. Masquerier pinxt. *Wm. Say sculpt.*

LADY HAMILTON

men who stood under the protection of an armistice, whereas it would have been so easy for him to reply, as many others had done in the same circumstances, that he was a general and not an executioner,* and moreover, that he was not a Neapolitan subject. But these measures were agreeable to his hatred and, no doubt, to his love also.

On June 29 and 30 fresh incidents occurred. More letters arrived from Palermo bringing the answer of the Court regarding the treaty of which they had now been informed. As she was opposed to an armistice, the Queen had not enough honesty or elevation of mind to submit to the inevitable and recognise the terms agreed upon. With her own hand she wrote comments on all the clauses of the Capitulation, which she termed shameful, dishonourable, revolting, exclaiming: "You should have attacked them with all your might." What did it matter to this mad woman how many lives were sacrificed to her passion. Not only was she willing to sacrifice her husband, but also her son: "The King on the one side, the Prince on the other," she wrote, "ought immediately to arm the provinces, march on the rebel city, and die beneath its ruins if there should be any resistance, rather than remain the vile slaves of the French brigands and their infamous accomplices the rebels."† The King and Acton, both having participated in the favours of this hysterical woman, had caught a touch of her folly and, at her prompting, they suddenly took an extreme course. Ruffo, the traitor, was to be arrested and sent to Palermo to

* Viscount d'Orthez sent this well-known retort to Charles IX. Many governors, amongst others the governor of Alençon, have answered in the same terms. General du Barail, who was in a command of a division during the Commune in 1871, relates that, having received orders to shoot every rebel taken bearing arms, he merely replied that it was no work for a general or his men, and contented himself with handing the insurgents over to the magistrates. Not one was shot.

† Eg. MSS. 2640, f. 274. Acton to Hamilton, June 26 and 27.

answer for his infamous conduct. On June 27, Acton wrote to Hamilton: "If that letter does not bring the Cardinal to breake the Truce immediately, and follow Lord Nelson's direction, His Majesty incloses here an order for the Cardinal to come *immediately* to Palermo to inform His Majesty of the serious business which is transacting in that Kingdom; but if the Cardinal should make some difficulty, His Majesty begs Lord Nelson to arrest and send the Cardinal to Palermo."* As for the King, whose pride could not brook the interference of a stranger, he wrote considerately to the Cardinal, telling him he must submit to Nelson or else he would be treated as a rebel.

Palermo, June 27, 1799.

At this moment, namely 2 o'clock in the afternoon, my frigate has arrived from Naples, and I have heard with inexpressible consolation of the deeds so happily accomplished by the very worthy and faithful Admiral, Lord Nelson and his squadron. I have read the declaration which he, in form of observations, has despatched to you. It could not be more wise, reasonable, and adapted to the end, and truly evangelical. I do not doubt that you immediately conformed to it, and acted in consequence according to his advice. Otherwise, that would be equivalent to declaring yourself a rebel which is impossible, after the many proofs of fidelity and attachment given me in the past. May the Lord preserve you as with all my heart I desire.†

FERDINANDO B.

These threats, that were as wild as they were inappropriate, considering they were addressed by the King to the man who had replaced him on the throne, were of no avail. When they reached Naples, the castles had already surrendered. It is just possible that Nelson did not care

* Eg. MSS. 2640, f. 274.

† Eg. MSS. 2640, f. 278.

to arrest the Cardinal in the midst of his troops,* or perhaps honest Hamilton refused to assist him in executing such a disgraceful measure. Mr Gutteridge considers that this was the most striking proof of his hero's generous disposition. Instead of making use of the unbounded powers† which had been bestowed on him so rashly, he contented himself with writing to the King: "I really do not believe that his Eminence has a disloyal thought towards overthrowing your Majesty's monarchy, but that his Eminence's wish was to have everything his own way."‡

However, the English author acknowledges that it was Hamilton's tact and not the Admiral's attitude, that brought about the pacification of the two adversaries. Nevertheless, Nelson is responsible for having let loose the passions which he might have chained up. Whether he succumbed to the caresses of a woman or took the decision of his own free will, his conduct was none the less shameful. In the name of humanity, and the respect due to treaties, he should have opposed Ferdinand and upheld Ruffo. Instead of which, shielding himself behind the orders sent from Palermo, Nelson changed his mind once more,—a circumstance which supports the

* Mr Gutteridge states that the Calabrians were so devoted to Ruffo that they would have followed him if he had wished to resist Nelson by force. The Admiral may have guessed this. The King was all the more inclined to believe in Ruffo's treachery as a report had been circulated that he wished to place his own brother Francesco on the throne of Naples. See Acton's letter to Hamilton on June 21. Eg. MSS. 2640, folio 268.

† In a letter written by Hamilton to Greville, the following sentence occurs: "We had full powers." When quoting this letter Mr Gutteridge makes an unfortunate remark: "We (i.e. Nelson, Hamilton, including perhaps Hamilton's wife) . . ." Gutteridge, Intro. p. lxxxii. It is just within the limit of things possible that an imbecile King, a Queen beside herself with passion, should have placed the welfare of a whole nation within the hands of a woman such as Emma! But it is strange that an author of merit should record the fact as quite natural, and make use of it in vindicating Nelson.

‡ National Archives of Naples. Gutteridge, No. 143.

view that he was under the influence of his mistress,—and caused Hamilton to write another note to the Cardinal:

EMINENCE,

My Lord Nelson desires me to inform your Eminence that, in consequence of an order which he has just received from His Sicilian Majesty, who entirely disapproves of the capitulation made with his rebellious subjects in the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, he is about to seize and make sure of those who have left them, and are on board the vessels in this port, submitting it to the opinion of your Eminence whether it would not be advisable to publish at first in Naples the reason of this transaction, and at the same time to warn the rebels who have escaped to Naples from the said castles that they must submit to the clemency of his Sicilian Majesty within the space of twenty-four hours under the pain of death.

W. HAMILTON.*

This letter might vindicate Nelson's conduct, had he only obeyed higher orders, but, as it happened, he had already violated the treaty which he was now told to annul. He had refused the honours of war to an enemy that had surrendered. He had detained the vessels that were about to sail.

Nelson's conduct in this affair was so strange that it must be examined closely. It is to be questioned whether the principal aim he had in view when he indulged in the *inganno* that Sacchinelli reproaches him with, was to deprive the Republicans of their last safeguard by making them give up their hostages. Such, at any rate, was the first consequence of the surrender of the castles, and their

* *Diaries*, Hon. G. Rose, vol. i, p. 238. Hamilton to Ruffo and to Acton. Although Ruffo was a subject of the King of Naples, he refused to obey this order and Nelson, the foreigner, issued the proclamation on his own authority. This one incident gives the key to the characters of the two men.

unfortunate defenders did not fail to proclaim it in a protest that was, however, of no avail: "After the arrival in this roadstead of the British fleet, commanded by your Excellency [the letter was addressed to Nelson] the capitulation was put into execution. On the one hand the garrisons of the Castles of Nuovo and Uovo set at liberty the prisoners of state and ten English prisoners, and placed the troops of his Britannic Majesty in possession of the gate of the royal palace which leads to the Castle of Nuovo. On the other hand, the troops of his Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias allowed the garrisons to march out with the honours of war to the naval arsenal, where they laid down their arms and embarked on the vessels that were to take them to Toulon. By means of these acts the Articles of Capitulation, which had been signed, have been ratified by Russia and by England, which has received the prisoners and the gate of the castle."*

Nelson was willing to accept any advantages offered him, but he gave nothing in return. It was not possible for Britain to uphold such a breach of faith. It was not even possible that proud Albion should admit that one of her admirals had been obliged to obey the commands of a King of Naples. Nelson was not ignorant of this fact. After having deceived his enemies, he had now to deceive his Government. He looked about him for the means of defending himself in the eyes of his chiefs, and of posterity. At first, he allowed the rumour to be spread that the castles had surrendered unconditionally, then he stated it officially himself. He wrote to Lord Keith telling him that he had refused to ratify the treaty concluded by Ruffo, and produced his note of June 24, adding: "Under this opinion the Rebels came out of the Castles, which

* Ricciardi's Memorial, Williams' *Sketches*, vol. ii, p. 319. The original is in French. Nelson replied: "I have shown your paper to your gracious King, who must be the best judge of the merits and demerits of his subjects." If this were the case, then why, on his own authority, did he order Caracciolo to be hanged? Ricciardi was banished.

was instantly occupied by the Marines of the Squadron."* Since the rebels had obeyed, who could blame his conduct! Having established this fact, on July 13, he declared to Lord Spencer that: "the Rebels came out of the Castles with this knowledge."† Henceforward, whenever he was called upon to justify his conduct, he made use of this false statement. In 1803, when writing to the historian Alexander Stephens, he reproduced it,‡ and, in his private papers he wrote that the two castles surrendered unconditionally on June 26.§ This statement is false, and no man knew it better than Nelson himself. Nevertheless, this falsehood has mystified historians, and been used as an argument by the champions of the dishonoured hero. Clarke and MacArthur have inserted this note in their *Life of Nelson*, and Mr Sichel and Mr Gutteridge both repeat the Admiral's assertion.‖

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, pp. 390-393.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 406.

‡ *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 520. This letter is followed by an amusing postscript. "I must beg leave to warn you to be careful how you mention the characters of such excellent sovereigns as the King and Queen of Naples. If you wish to have any conversation with me on the subject, I shall be at home any morning at 10 o'clock." Nelson did not dare to *write* that the King was an imbecile. But Emma had so often repeated it to him that he was well aware of the fact.

§ From one of Lord Nelson's private notes on the subject.

‖ Mr Gutteridge mentions Cooper Williams, an eye-witness of the events who believed that the patriots had surrendered unconditionally. Evidently Mr Cooper Williams, who was chaplain on board one of the vessels, merely repeated the assertion made by his chief, Lord Nelson. Cacciatore simply reproduces the act of investment of Castell Uovo, "Micheroux appeared *per prendere a tenore della capitolazione possesso*." The garrison was called together: "Chiesto loro di spiegare la lora volonta, d'imbarcarsi per Tolone o pure restare quivi a tenore della capitolazione, si e trovato essere il numero di noventa cinque quelli che si son imbarcati." Mr Gutteridge says this document must be considered "With grave suspicion". By these means, a prejudiced author gets rid of proofs that interfere with his theory! The writers of this work will also treat one of Nelson's documents with distrust, but they will be able to give their reasons for doing so.

In his defence, Nelson has also stated that he believed an armistice had been concluded between the belligerents and that, arriving with his fleet, he had a right to break it. He did not make any such statement in the presence of Ruffo, who, by one word, could have silenced him. He inserted this note in his private papers. This is another falsehood, but the habitual defenders of Nelson take it for unadulterated truth. Mr Gutteridge attaches great importance to a *Memorandum on the Armistice*, which appears amongst the Dispatches. In this document, Nelson's opinion is drawn up in such a strange manner that it hardly seems trustworthy. In the first place, it is not in his handwriting. He merely wrote at the top of the paper: "Opinion delivered before I saw the treaty of Armistice etc.," and at the end of the document: "Read and explained and rejected by the Cardinal."*

Sacchinelli, who was an eye-witness, makes no reference to any discussion of this sort, nor is it mentioned in the letters exchanged from June 24 to June 27, between Nelson, Ruffo, Hamilton, and the other people connected with the question at issue. Therefore, it may be safely concluded that this explanation of his conduct was invented by Nelson later on, when he was accused of treachery in England. It is true that before the capitulation was settled, the French had demanded a truce of twenty days; but, the treaty having been signed, this negotiation was cancelled, and was not mentioned after the signature.

If the Armistice had been subject to conditions, these conditions would figure in the deed, in such words as: "The undersigned promise to surrender in three days, provided, etc.," but no such terms are mentioned. Again, had the Armistice been conditional, the documents of the time would mention the fact; but not one bears the slightest reference to such an understanding. It is true, in one of his letters, and more particularly in a very important document which will be given further on, Hamil-

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, pp. 384-386.

ton mentions an *armistice*; but the word is misused, as may be gathered from the contents of the letter, from which it is evident that there was no question of a mere truce, but of ceasing hostilities.

Before Nelson's arrival there had been a twenty days' armistice, between Ruffo and the Republicans for the purpose of discussing the conditions of surrender. This truce had come to an end before Nelson appeared on the scene, and the treaty stood in its stead.*

At first, when Nelson had not yet built up his system of defence, he referred only to the final treaty. Thus on July 13, he wrote to Earl Spencer: "On my fortunate arrival here I found a most infamous treaty entered into with the Rebels in direct disobedience of His Sicilian Majesty's orders. I had the happiness of saving his Majesty's honour, rejecting with disdain any terms but unconditional submission, to Rebels . . . His Majesty has entirely approved of my conduct in this matter."†

It is not possible to say what Spencer thought on receiving this dispatch. Now that all the details of the affair have come to light, it is easy to guess for what purpose Nelson wrote these lines. He was trying to forestall a reproach that had not yet been uttered against him, but which he felt would reach him in the near future. He knew that England would not accept his view of the violation of the treaty, therefore, he hastened to say that the treaty was most infamous. He carefully avoided saying where the infamy lay. He knew well that, were he to state the bare truth, he would be condemned. By

* The proof of this statement is contained in the following order :

"The officers commanding His Majesty's troops on all the points of the district Chiaia, are to take measures for suspending hostilities, throughout their posts, against the Castles Uovo and Nuovo, until further order, a truce having been concluded in order to discuss a capitulation. Naples, June 19, 1799.

Signed : Antonio Miche-Raous,
Plenipotentiary to His Sicilian Majesty."

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 406.

these words, full of artful perfidy, he opened a field to the wildest conjectures. At home they might suppose that the Neapolitans had exacted that Ferdinand IV should do public penance, a halter round his neck, confessing himself to be a tyrant; or else, that the rebels had forced him to accept an anarchical Constitution; or, better still, it might be imagined that they planned handing over the fortress to the French, to the common enemy. This consideration would suffice to justify the righteous anger affected by Nelson and the fears of the British Government, the one having an obscure end in view, whilst the other had quite a different motive.

When Nelson declared that he had been "fortunate" enough to save the honour of the King of Naples, he showed that he had not the slightest conception of what his chiefs were aiming at. His mission was not to save the honour of a prince whom all princes despised, but to reconquer the Kingdom of Naples, and to make it join the coalition against France. Had it been necessary to further this purpose, Britain would have made very many more concessions than Ruffo himself. Later on, for instance, in spite of the opposition of the King of Naples, she granted a constitution to Sicily.

We must now return to our examination of the system of defence adopted by Messrs von Helfert and Gutteridge. According to these writers, Nelson must be absolved as having merely carried out the King's commands. Ruffo and the rebels themselves knew full well that Ferdinand and above all Queen Caroline, had made up their minds to exercise no clemency and to enter into no agreement with their subjects. The Queen's atrocious sentence that "A general massacre would not cause me the slightest pain,"* has already been quoted. The next day

* It is a curious fact that, a few years later, when writing to his brother Joseph whom he had made King of Naples, Napoleon expressed the same sanguinary thought concerning the Neapolitans. "Brother, I should like the Neapolitan dogs to revolt. Unless you make an

the vindictive sovereign was still in the same state of bloodthirsty passion when she wrote: "In the King's name and for my sake, I implore you, if ever the Austrians or the Russians come near Rome or Naples, never grant any agreement, covenant, truce or pardon to these rascals."* Marie-Caroline was not always in this state of wild fanaticism, bordering on madness and which may be accounted for, though not excused, by the fact that she had been outraged in all her feeling as a woman, a mother, and above all, as a Queen. On some occasions she displayed more justice, though no tenderness, towards men she could not be expected to love. She could recognise the exigencies of politics, she could even find words of humane pity. On June 15 she wrote: "Gaeta, Capua and Naples alone remain in the hands of the Republicans . . . The capital, and the castles are theirs, and, as we wish to avoid shedding the blood of our own subjects, some measures must be taken . . . Two great Genoese vessels full of Generals and *lycurgues* have sailed. They were allowed to depart, for we do not desire the sanguinary reprisals which they well deserve, but only to be rid of them."†

On June 20, conscious of victory, she once more gave vent to her vindictive feelings. Nelson "is hastening on with the entire fleet to compel them to surrender . . .

example of them, you will never master them. I should look on a revolution in Naples in the same way as a father would regard his children who had small-pox; provided it does not weaken the constitution too much, it is a very salutary crisis." Napoleon was of the opinion that a little blood-shed would be very profitable to the Neapolitans, and result in the establishment of order in their city. The Queen protested that she entertained no idea of revenge; she was simply acting in the interest of a political system. But Napoleon wished to strike at the rabble, whereas Marie-Caroline wanted to cut down the flower of the intellectual Neapolitans. What would be left of the sick man who had been subjected to such blood-letting?

* *Correspondence de Marie-Caroline.* No. 329.

† *Correspondence de Marie-Caroline.* No. 331.

for, yielding to the rebels means the loss of the crown."* From these varying moods, it would seem that her decision was not so irrevocable but that a humane commander might have evaded it. Through Emma, Nelson was most certainly informed of these fluctuations, therefore he was free to act as he thought best. On the other hand, Ruffo, who had at least a general idea of the intentions of the Court, never ceased to inveigh against their barbarity, and to preach clemency.†

* *Correspondence de Marie-Caroline.* No. 332.

† It is a singular and significant fact that none of the letters in which Ruffo expressed these sentiments have come down to posterity. The people they were addressed to destroyed them. But the Cardinal kept the answers he received, and these leave no doubt as to what he himself had written. On April 4, Acton wrote to him thus: "Assuredly, it is well known that mercy is becoming and natural to the King; but the Republican Governors, the notorious traitors, and those who have taken office during this infamous rebellion, insulting their sovereign with great and horrible villainy by acts and proclamations, must be distinguished from those who, as I have said, have been led astray or allured into giving their adherence without becoming members of this impious form of Government . . . His Majesty wishes to beg your Eminence to propose to him a plan of chastisement to be taken as a basis against the avowed rebels who, by taking office in the Republic, have usurped the sovereign power; and for those who were formerly in the service of His Majesty, His Majesty desires that the penalty should be death, or deportation." (Archives of Naples.)

On April 14, the Queen wrote: "I see above all that in this capital the greater number are good and loyal. But no pity is to be shown. The bad weeds that poison the others must be uprooted, destroyed, annihilated and deported." (Archives of Naples). On May 17, she wrote once more; "I must confess we do not agree with you that we should dissimulate, forget, or even reward, in order to win over the leaders of our ruffians. It is not a spirit of revenge, that makes us differ with your opinion. My heart harbours no such passion . . . but I am speaking with the sovereign contempt and the indifference which I feel towards our villains." (Archives of Naples.)

The letters written by the Queen on May 23 and June 14, may also be referred to. On the latter date she wrote: "Open negotiations with St. Elmo and its French commander, but no negotiations with our rebel subjects. In his mercy, the King will pardon and out of his goodness lessen their punishments, but he will never capitulate or treat with guilty rebels, who are at the last gasp, and who would do harm

The excesses committed by the victorious people appalled him, but he was helpless to arrest them. On June 21, he wrote to Acton: "Fifteen hundred Jacobins have been brought to me, and as I do not know where to put them for safety, I am keeping them in the garrets at the *Ponte Maddalena*. Before my very eyes, fifty at least were carried away or shot, and I was unable to prevent it. At least two hundred helpless, wounded soldiers have been massacred here. Seeing that I shuddered at such a sight, they comforted me by saying that the murdered men were really the leaders of the brigands, and that the wounded were resolute enemies of the human race; in a word, that they were well known to the people. I hope this is true, and that reassures me somewhat."*

Naples had witnessed enough bloodshed, too much indeed. Ruffo's heart swelled with indignation and pity, nor did he conceal his feelings. He tried to find a remedy to all these evils, endeavouring to establish some sort of order in the midst of anarchy, defending himself against the ferocity of his own troops, and of the Neapolitan rabble. When a man was brought before him, accused of being a rebel, Ruffo would first discover whether or no his name was entered on a special register which he kept to that effect. If he found it, he would detain the man; but if, on the contrary, he was not on the

were it still in their power, being like mice caught in a trap." (Archives of Naples.)

Ruffo must have received this letter at the very moment when he was negotiating. He was right in judging that it was best to act promptly. Believing that her enemies were caught in a trap, Marie-Caroline lost sight of the fact that they might still destroy the city and receive help from the French fleet. However, to these last words she added a more sensible remark: "This is my opinion which I submit to your judgment and knowledge. If I do not always agree with you, I am not the less conscious of the great debt of gratitude that we have incurred towards you."

See also later a letter written by the King on June 20, referring to the same subject.

* Archives of Naples.

list, the denunciator received one hundred and fifty lashes.* He strove to be just. Had he not a right to act like a master, and to speak haughtily to the King as well as to the people? It was he, not Nelson, who had reconquered the Kingdom. He had every reason to expect and believe that his voice would be listened to. There was every ground to hope that the cries of rage that escaped Ferdinand and Marie-Caroline, and which, to some extent, must be excused by the painful position of the exiled monarchs, would not find relief in too much bloodshed. They were in the hands of Ruffo and Nelson who had a right to make them respect the convention that had been entered into! United, they were sure of success. It was impossible to bind the hands of the glorious Cardinal, who, by his sole efforts, had reconquered Naples. The instructions sent by the King still left him a certain amount of independence, and he would not have accepted them otherwise, for in time of warfare, it is not possible to foresee all events. It is for the general to decide, ultimately, not the Prince who is far from the field of action. The King had said: "In the military capitulation which may take place with the enemy who occupy St Elmo, the power of stipulating for their departure may be extended to several rebels, even to the leaders, according to circumstances, if the general good, the promptitude of the operation, and reasons of weight make it advisable."† This was sound good sense. Mr Gutteridge has vainly endeavoured to lessen the importance of this clause, to which the King consented on June 10, at the very moment when the Cardinal was drawing near to Naples. He pretends that such terms could only be offered to the French, the enemy of the land, but not to the Neapolitan rebels. Now, this is precisely what took place, for Méjean vouched for the treaty. Finally, there is at least one document proving that Nelson acted on his own initiative,

* *Diario* by de Nicola. Archives of Naples.

† Gutteridge, No. 16, p. 70.

and without consulting the King. This letter, written by Hamilton to Ruffo has already been mentioned. It was despatched on June 24. It marks the beginning of the difference of opinion, which divided the Admiral and the soldier Cardinal. At such a moment Nelson should have produced the King's orders. This would have been the best means of convincing his adversary. But Nelson did not refer to the King, probably because he did not yet know what Ferdinand's wishes might be.

The King of Naples and more especially his Queen, have each their share of responsibility in the Counter-Revolution of 1799, but Nelson claimed a part which it was his duty to avoid and which he might have evaded.

During these days that throw such a sad light on history, we have caught glimpses of Lady Hamilton urging on the Admiral. Now we must examine facts, and ascertain to what extent the beautiful wife of the British Ambassador was responsible for her lover's behaviour.

CHAPTER X

The part of Sir William and Lady Hamilton in the counter-revolution —Hamilton and Nelson—Hamilton's real attitude—His letters of June 27th—The Cardinal's thanks—Lady Hamilton's indifference —She becomes intermediary—Her real interests—Hamilton's concession to Nelson—Lady Hamilton and the Queen—The Case of Cirillo.

IN spite of the pleas of his defenders, be they interested or merely obtuse, it is easy to discover what part Nelson played in the Counter-Revolution; but Lady Hamilton's part is far less obvious. Yet, her attitude cannot be overlooked. The wife of the British Ambassador has been accused of urging her lover to deeds of treachery and cruelty: she must be either cleared or stand condemned. The documents that exonerate her, as well as those that impeach her, are far less numerous and less convincing than those that establish so clearly Nelson's guilt. Much research is required to arrive at the truth.

First of all it must be remarked that although Emma had not given up Nelson in the May of 1799, she was still living with her husband, whom she accompanied on board the *Foudroyant*. No doubt her heart, if she had one, was with Nelson; but the laws of decorum, her good fame and prudence obliged her to preserve the proprieties in regard to Hamilton. Not only was it necessary that she should conceal from him her guilty intercourse with Nelson, but she had to be careful not to cross him in any way. As a matter of fact at this period husband and wife were on the best of terms. Since her marriage she had really developed a talent for diplomacy. But a careful examination of Hamilton's attitude throws some light upon the situation.

Republican authors, being ill-informed, have overlooked Hamilton's intervention, attributing all the evils to the "fatal woman." On the other hand, Sacchinelli and Cacciatore, the two royalists, maintain that Hamilton played a very active and sinister part. The statements put forward by these two writers are based on documents that cannot be questioned. They show that "Nelson was not the man to let himself be influenced by a woman in a matter of such importance as the surrender of the castles. He held to one principle and was imbued with the principle that *sovereigns do not treat with rebel subjects*. Whether this doctrine is sound or not, the consequences must be imputed to two persons only, Nelson and Hamilton."*

It is not just that the Minister should be condemned with the Admiral. Hamilton was an honourable man; his disposition was gentle, devoid of prejudices, and he entertained no absolute principles or uncompromising views such as Nelson professed. He was far more highly cultured than the Admiral, he was well versed in English liberalism, its doctrines and its principles. Moreover, he was a diplomatist and knew the value of a treaty. Therefore, it seems highly improbable that, on his own authority, he would have suggested violating an agreement ratified by four different powers. But he loved Nelson and admired him so intensely that, at the time, it never occurred to him that the great man could make a mistake. On the other hand, Nelson with his crafty, deceitful and malicious disposition, was anxious to push forward Hamilton, to compromise him, so that, in case of need, he might have an accomplice, a surety as well as a defender. For this purpose he persuaded Hamilton to write for him, and on June 24, *Hamilton expressed not his own views but those of Nelson.*† Deceived by these

* Cacciatore, p. 212.

† On the same day Hamilton wrote to Acton: "Of course the cardinal, having now the support of Great Britain, his Sicilian Majesty's faithful ally, cannot be obliged to fulfil the articles he has granted when

appearances, Sacchinelli and Cacciatore attribute to Hamilton a part which he did not play during the verbal negotiations between Ruffo and Nelson. The proof of this will be given later. Besides, Hamilton was merely acting as interpreter between the Cardinal and Nelson, who did not know Italian. Therefore, when the Ambassador expressed an opinion to Ruffo, it must be understood that he was speaking in Nelson's name. Such an attitude of self-effacement on the part of a British Ambassador is difficult to understand.

His contemporaries may not have understood his attitude, but it is fully explained by a document that has come to light, and which will be given later, after some inevitable explanations.

It is possible that, at first, Hamilton did not approve of Ruffo's treaty. This may have been his personal feeling; but it seems improbable. It is more likely that he was so much under the influence of Nelson that it was not even necessary for Emma to intervene between them. However, when Sir William met Ruffo in the Bay of Naples, and witnessed the noble attitude and the no less elevated motives that guided his conduct, he may still have held to his own point of view, realising at the same time, however, that Nelson and the Neapolitan Court must submit to the inevitable, and recognise a treaty solemnly signed by four powers. His experience as a diplomatist must have brought him to this conclusion. He therefore exerted his influence in this direction and obtained, or at least thought he had obtained, Nelson's approval. It was then, and with the Admiral's assent, that he despatched Troubridge and Ball to Ruffo. Believing the matter settled, he freely related the proceedings to Acton in a letter which fortunately has been preserved in the Record Office at Naples. Several historians knew of the existence of this document, but most of them

in a feeble state." (Gutteridge, No. 86, p. 207.) These are not the sentiments of a diplomatist. They are at variance with Hamilton's honest disposition. Evidently the letter was dictated by Nelson.

have passed it over in silence, because it contains crushing evidence against Nelson. Mr Gutteridge has published it.* Mr Walter Sichel has only made use of it, in as much as it suited the purpose of his argument. It has here been reproduced in its entirety:

Foudroyant,
Bay of Naples,
June 27, 1799.

My dear Sir,

Your Excellency will have perceived by my last that the opinions of the Cardinal and Lord Nelson by no means coincided. However, upon cool reflection, Lord Nelson authorised me to write to his Eminency early yesterday morning and assure him that he would not do anything that could break the armistice which his Eminency had thought proper to make with the rebels in the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, and that his Lordship was ready to give him any assistance that the fleet under his command could afford, and that his Eminency thought for the good of his Sicilian Majesty's service. This produced the best effect possible. Naples had been in confusion expecting Lord Nelson to break the armistice; now all was calm, and the Cardinal settled with Captains Ball and Troubridge that the rebels should embark from the castles of Uovo and Nuovo in the evening, and that 500 marines should be put on shore from the fleet to garrison the two castles where now, thank God, his Sicilian Majesty's flags are flying, and the short-lived republican flags are now in the cabin of the *Foudroyant*, and so will I hope very soon be the French flag still flying at St Elmo. We were with Lord Nelson in his boat seeing the marines land at the Health Office; the joy of the people was excessive, the British and Neapolitan colours displayed from many windows, and when we took possession of the castles a *feu de joie* went all over Naples, and at night great illuminations as on the former

* Gutteridge, No. 116, page 249.

nights. In short, I am now in the greatest hopes that Lord Nelson's coming here will be of infinite service to their Sicilian Majesties. A little of my phlegm was necessary between the cardinal and Lord Nelson or all would have been up the very first day, and the cardinal has written to thank me and Lady Hamilton. The Tree of Abomination is now cutting down opposite the king's palace and the red cap will be taken off the giant's head. Captain Troubridge is gone to execute this business, and the rebels on board of the polaccas cannot stir without a passport from Lord Nelson. Caracciolo and 12 of the most infamous rebels are this day to be sent to Lord Nelson. If my opinion is relished, they should be sent directly to be tried by the judge at Procida, and such as are condemned be brought back and executed here. Caracciolo will probably be seen hanging at the yard-arm of the *Minerva*, Neapolitan frigate, from daybreak to sunset, for such an example is necessary for the future marine service of his Sicilian Majesty, and particularly as Jacobinism had prevailed so much in the Neapolitan marine.

St Elmo has fired every night 7 or 8 shot. We are told it was at some Calabrese that were taking up rebels under the walls of the castle. I believe the honour of reducing St Elmo will fall to the lot of the British and Russian troops; however, we now shall act perfectly in concert with the cardinal, though we think the same we did at first as to the treaty his Eminency made before our arrival. If one cannot do exactly as one could wish, one must do the next best thing, and that is what Lord Nelson is doing, and I hope the result will be approved by their Sicilian Majesties. Salandra's conduct is such that I am convinced that he himself is an honest man and loyal, whatever his connections may be.

Adieu, etc.,

Wm. Hamilton.

This letter, as well as all those which Hamilton wrote to Ruffo on that same day, require some explanation.

The Ambassador appears really to have come round to the Cardinal's views. This is evident in the sentence: "We think the same we did at first as to the treaty."*

Hamilton could not have failed to notice that Nelson had already violated the treaty which he had promised to observe; for, not only were the prisoners not allowed to return to France, but *they could not move without a passport from the Admiral.* Later on, Hamilton soothed the slight scruples that disturbed his soul, by stating that he had merely submitted to the will of the King of Naples. On July 14, he wrote to Lord Grenville: "Lord Nelson assured the Cardinal at the same time that he did not mean to do anything contrary to his Eminency's treaty, but as that treaty could not be valid until it had been ratified by his Sicilian Majesty, his Lordship's meaning was only to secure his Majesty's rebellious subjects until his Majesty's further pleasure should be known."† This condition was not mentioned in the correspondence that was exchanged on June 27. The Ambassador invented this argument in order to cover the friend he was to defend in all circumstances. At length he succeeded in persuading himself that he had always shared Nelson's relentless and uncompromising views. The same hand that on June 27 had traced the amiable and conciliatory note to Ruffo, wrote in the following strain to Charles Greville: "Lord Nelson has secured all the chiefs of the Jacobine nobility and their party, who woud otherwise have escaped the hand of justice by the rascality or imbecility of the King's Vicar-Gen[l]."‡

* In his correspondence Hamilton often contradicts Nelson, especially in the letter written on June 27. Mr Gutteridge tries to depreciate the value of his testimony by alleging that "Sir William was also at the time in a state of complete nervous prostration" (Gutteridge Intro., p. xxxvii). No other author has made such a statement and, judging by the many letters which the Ambassador wrote at this period, he seems to have been in full possession of all his faculties. It is strange for an historian to have recourse to such arguments in order to get rid of a tiresome witness.

† Gutteridge, No. 158, p. 313.

‡ July 14, Morrison's *Nelson Papers*, vol. ii, p. 53.

The gratitude which the Cardinal expressed not only to Hamilton, but *also* to his wife, must now be considered. Emma had indeed acted as interpreter and had affected conciliatory sentiments. But did she really deserve Ruffo's effusive thanks! Her defenders, as well as her detractors, have exaggerated the importance of the part she played. Some represent her as a relentless fury pursuing the Republicans, others see in her an angel of mercy, interceding with Marie-Caroline and Nelson. This excess of blame or praise was unmerited.

In this circumstance she was actuated by the same selfish motive that invariably guided her throughout her life. She was absolutely indifferent to all that did not affect her own interests. Instinctively, and in common with her countrymen, she loathed the French and the Republicans; but, for lack of energy, intellect or instruction, or perhaps from sheer indifference, she also detested all discussions and, unlike most women, did not care to contradict. Had she been fond of wrangling, she would been obliged to support her opinions, to argue, and defend them by serious effort, and this did not suit her purpose, as it was not so easy as affectations of manner and graceful attitudes. Consequently, she always shared the opinion of whoever might be speaking, and when Ruffo wanted his treaty respected, she thought he was quite right. When, weary of interpreting for the two self-willed leaders, Hamilton gave up the arduous task, Emma for a time took the burden on her shoulders and played an active and conciliatory part. No doubt, Ruffo really felt grateful and admired her generous attitude. But she did not deserve any praise. By withdrawing from the discussion, Hamilton had proved that he had now adopted the Cardinal's view of the situation, and regretted not having overcome his friend's opposition. Since his wife consented to replace him, it is evident that she was indifferent to what took place. The one thing that she desired was to return to Naples as soon as possible and see her royal friends established once more on

their throne. She longed to be back in her *palazzo*, entertaining, dancing, singing, and receiving the applause and adoration that was showered upon her.* She had no wish to dabble in diplomatic negotiations. They had been forced upon her. To her, the solution that could be arrived at the quickest would surely be the best. The relentless attitude of the Queen and of Nelson seemed likely to become a cause of danger,† so she concluded the Cardinal's clemency might be more useful in arriving at a solution. In any case, she wanted the matter to be settled promptly, and as Ruffo would not give way, the best policy was to advocate his cause.

From the last lines of the above mentioned letter, it is evident that the treaty had been violated, and that Hamilton had countenanced the breach of faith. This is not to be wondered at, since the British Minister had first censured the Cardinal's behaviour and proclaimed that the Crown was omnipotent! However, as a convention had been signed, it should have been accepted or rejected just as it stood, and it is difficult to account for the implied compromise mentioned in the letter. It is possible that Nelson had yielded as to the essential part of the matter, still maintaining, however, that certain individuals who were more guilty than the others must necessarily be excluded from the amnesty, and that he would undertake to mete out justice to the rebels, as the

* On July 30, the Queen wrote to her: "I am very much afraid, my dear Emma, that your health will suffer from this great heat, and through being cooped up on a vessel."

† Emma was well aware that the Queen's conduct and her violent disposition had, to a great extent, been the cause of the insurrection. After the victory she wrote: "*All, all* is changed. She has been very *unfortunate*; but she is a good woman . . . and will make for the future *amende honorable* for the past." (Morrison MSS. 411.) When Marie-Caroline remained at Palermo whilst the King returned to Naples, she wrote herself; "I was afraid of lessening the love and enthusiasm which the King will call forth, and which is not felt for me." (*Carteggio*, p. 199.) And again on July 7, she wrote; "I am quite decided to withdraw entirely from the world on my return to Naples." (*Carteggio*, p. 201.) These sentiments appear frequently in her letters to Gallo.

Cardinal's scruples prevented him from participating in the punishment. In this case it would seem that to save the others the Cardinal surrendered thirteen wretched victims. This agreement was not written down, as it was a disgrace to both parties—to Nelson, because he desired the massacre; to the Cardinal, because he delivered up men whom he had promised to defend.

This, after much research, appears to be the most reasonable explanation of the parts played by the different actors in the tragedy: by Nelson, to whom we shall return later; by Ruffo, who perhaps did not carry on his noble resistance to the end;* and by the Hamiltons, who were led to alter their opinions from various motives—on his part, honourable; on hers, vague or interested.†

One word more concerning the part played by Lady Hamilton. Apart from her hatred of the Jacobins, she was urged by Marie-Caroline who, before she even knew the terms of the treaty, declared she would never countenance it *since she was the stronger.* "It is impossible for me to treat *avec cette canaille.*‡ . . . The

* "Fearing these sad events and the anger of the King, Ruffo was silent and gave his aid," Colletta, vol. iv, ch. iii. In 1806, disgusted no doubt with his King, Ruffo had no difficulty in acknowledging Joseph Buonaparte.

† If some of our suppositions are open to dispute, it must, at least, be admitted that they are all feasible and, above all, that they are not dictated by any prejudice or preconceived idea.

‡ This *canaille* included her physician Don Cirillo, Prince Pignatelli, Admiral Caracciolo, Duke Monteleone, etc. The aristocracy and the middle classes wearying of Marie-Caroline's tyranny had upheld the Republic against the lower classes that had remained loyal. The Queen realised this fact, but overlooked the causes. On May 22, 1798, she wrote from Palermo: "The Neapolitans have excelled their foster-mother France, but in our country the lower classes are deferential. Those who have the most to lose are the most enraged—the nobility, the bishops, monks and petty lawyers. But the higher magistrates and the people are faithful and show themselves so on all occasions." On December 11 and 22, 1798, she had written much in the same strain. She did not perceive that she was witnessing a great social and civil movement, by which the most enlightened portion of the population revolted against the excesses of a corrupt monarchy. *La Grande Grèce: paysages et histoire*, by Francois Lenormant, vol. ii, pp. 170–184.

sight of the brave English squadron is my hope . . . The females who have distinguished themselves in the revolution to be treated in the same way, and that without pity . . . There is no need of a special commission: it is not an undecided cause, but a palpable, proved fact . . . Finally, my dear Lady, I recommend Lord Nelson to treat Naples as if it were an Irish town in rebellion similarly placed. France will be none the better for all these thousands of rascals; we shall be all the better without them."* The Queen would not have been ill-pleased if Nelson, a foreigner, had taken upon himself the distribution of the punishments she had in store for the Revolutionary leaders and their followers. She wanted to shift the heavy responsibility on to his shoulders, therefore she opened her mind to Emma, so that she might work on him and prepare him for the task. In spite of her indifference, Emma was happy in the Queen's friendship, and glad to be associated with negotiations upon which so many human lives depended, and happy women know no pity. Cruelty, and an eagerness in countenancing all underhand transactions, seemed to add to the favourite's happiness. Her servile disposition made her proud to obey the Queen's commands. But this same woman would just as willingly have preached clemency to Nelson, had Marie-Caroline ordered her to do so. Little did she care what the Queen commanded. All she wanted was to obey blindly the Sovereign whom she was proud to approach and call her friend.

When women of the highest society in Naples, women such as the Marchese San Felice and Eleonora de Fonseca-Pimentel were sentenced to death, Lady Hamilton was accused of having singled them out to their murderers, to revenge herself on the aristocratic families that had refused to receive her. It is impossible for a conscientious historian to take into account such grave accusations when they are not supported by proofs. But Hamil-

* Pettigrew, vol. i, p. 234, Gutteridge, p. 211.

ton's beautiful wife certainly deserves one reproach. She could have used her power over Nelson to incline him towards mercy, and thus save human lives. By so doing, she might to some extent have rehabilitated herself. Cirillo, the King's physician and Emma's own doctor, was an eminent savant and a member of the Royal Society in London. He had drawn up a scheme of a constitution for the Republic. When arraigned he implored the pity of his former client. Emma presented the petition to Nelson, who wrote in the margin*: "Domenico Cirillo, who had been the King's physician might have been saved, but that he chose to play the fool, and lie, denying that he had ever made speeches against the Government, and that he had only taken care of the poor in the hospitals."

Cirillo was executed. Certainly Nelson and his mistress would have reaped more honour had they pretended to believe in the excuse he alleged and have let him off.

There is no purpose in expanding this account of the horrors committed at Naples, which only recall the worst things recorded in history, the crimes of Kings and people, the massacre of the Albigenses and the Vaudois, the eve of St Bartholomew, the September Massacres, the Reign of Terror, the martyrs of Poland and Ireland. . . . It is a hateful task to relate such sanguinary deeds of madness. However, as Lady Hamilton was connected with Admiral Caracciolo's fate, it will be necessary to made an exception in his case.

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, App. p. 505.

CHAPTER XI

Caracciolo—His part in the revolution—His flight and arrest—Nelson's indignation with him—His trial and condemnation—Nelson refuses to postpone the execution—Sir William Hamilton's letter on the subject—Thurn's letter—Captain Brenton's account—An anonymous English account—Lady Hamilton's two interventions—Caracciolo's last requests—Nelson's silence—Opinions of Palumbo, Sir John Mackintosh, Cacciatore and Gutteridge—Caracciolo's Corpse—Weakness of the counter-revolution in Naples—General disaffection about the Queen—She is imprisoned and exiled—Her death—Nelson's death.

FRANCESCO CARACCIOLO is now regarded as the most illustrious victim of the Counter-Revolution of Naples,* and has become the eponymous hero, and he owes these honours solely to his executioner, Nelson, who, pursuing him with barbarous and incomprehensible fury, succeeded in making him interesting although in reality there was nothing praiseworthy about him.† At the present day one of the finest quays in Naples is named after Caracciolo. On a neighbouring house the following inscription may be read—

In questa casa nacque
Francesco Caracciolo
Ammiraglio
Il 18 gennaio 1752
Strangolato al 29 giuegno 1799.
Il municipio P. 1868.

* Most of the Royalist historians, Coppi, for instance, in the *Annali d'Italia dal* 1750 (Rome 1829), vol. iii, and Emm. Palermo, in his *Breve cenno su la Republica napoletana*, bestow the highest praise on Caracciolo and see in him only a victim.

† This is the opinion of Botta himself: 'In questo certamento il suo fallere fu enorme." (*Op. cit.* i, xviii.)

FRANCESCO CARACCIOLO, ADMIRAL OF THE PARTHENOPAEAN REPUBLIC, EXECUTED 1799
From a miniature by Michele d'Urso

That is all. There are no words of praise, because the dead man had not deserved them. But he had been *strangolato*, and so humanity entered this protest against his ignominious punishment. If all that has been written about this drama were to disappear, and this inscription alone remained, it would be incomprehensible but for this commentary.

Caracciolo belonged to a princely house, and had risen to the rank of Rear-Admiral. He was not altogether without merit. After having learnt seamanship in the British navy under Rodney, he had fought against the French in 1795, under Admiral Hotham; and at the naval battle of Savona his daring and skill had won him the praise of his chiefs.* He was then captain of a frigate. But during the Revolution in Naples his conduct was strangely equivocal. He had figured in the escort that attended the royal family on their flight to Palermo, and had then asked the King to allow him to return to Naples so that "he might not be affected by the decree aimed at the property of absent citizens." But it stands to reason that, when the King authorised him to leave Palermo, he did not expect him to place himself under the Republican standard† and fight against his Sovereign. Caracciolo, who was at heart a Jacobin, believed that the new Government was destined to be victorious. He openly joined the rebels and thus became a traitor. He thought the throne of Naples was about to be overthrown as it had been in France, where for the last seven years the Republic had existed. He fancied that this form of government would take root in his own country. The French General, Macdonald, worked hard to this end, and persuaded him to take up the cause of the new Republic.‡ His ambition was to play a great part in the Government.

* Colletta, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, ch. iii.

† *Marie-Caroline*, by André Bonnefons, ch. v, ii.

‡ *Souvenirs*, by Maréchal Macdonald, Duc de Tarente, p. 69.

Unfortunately, his character was not equal to his aspirations. He considered that it behoved him to give some pledge to his new party, for, being a prince and closely allied to the King,* he was looked upon with some suspicion by the Revolutionists. In order to curry favour with them, he had recourse to a very unworthy expedient whereby he sought to flatter their feelings. He enlisted as a common soldier.† It was impossible, of course, for him to remain in this position, and he was soon put in command of the Republican navy. At this moment no one, and least of all Nelson, could believe he was a traitor. On April 13 Captain Troubridge wrote to Nelson: "I enclose your Lordship one of Caraccioli's letters, as head of the Marine. I hope he has been forced into this measure."‡ And again on April 18: "Caraccioli, I am assured by all the sailors, is not a *Jacobin*, but forced to act as he does. They sign his name to printed papers without his authority."‡ And writing to Lord Spencer on April 29, Nelson said: "Caracciolo has resigned his situation as Head of the Marine. This man was fool enough to quit his Master when he thought his case desperate; yet, in his heart, I believe he is no Jacobin. The fishermen, a few days ago, told him publicly, 'We believe you are loyal, and sent by the King; but much as we love you, if we find you disloyal, you shall be amongst the first to fall.'"§

However, when Caracciolo took command of the Republican fleet and fired on the King's colours it was impossible to doubt his treachery. "That scoundrel

* Marie-Caroline wrote to her daughter the Empress: "Many of our people, amongst others Caracciolo who is in the navy, and whom we have always distinguished, ask to return to Naples. Each demand is like a stab with a dagger."

† *Fabrizio Ruffo* by von Helfert, p. 183. M. Fauchier Magnan seems to think that it was required of him to enlist in the ranks; but this seems improbable.

‡ *Dispatches*, iii, p. 334.

§ *Dispatches*, iii, p. 341.

Caracciolo!" "The conduct of this most ungrateful traitor fills me with disgust." "A mad ungrateful wretch," wrote the Queen in her letters. "The English fleet had scarcely left Procida when we were very seriously attacked by twenty-three vessels commanded by that most ungrateful and faithless Caracciolo. Thank God, brave Thurn and Cianchi repulsed them, but they are already making preparations for a fresh attack, and Caracciolo will never rest until he has gratified his personal hatred."* In a dispatch to Nelson, Foote states: "Caracciolo threatens a second attack, with a considerable addition of force."† On June 8, Esterhazy-Cresceri wrote: "The latest news from the Kingdom of Naples is . . . that the rebel Caracciolo . . . having dared to attack the few British vessels remaining in the roads of Procida, was driven back with loss." "Procida still holds out. The British frigate has arrived there from Messina, one of our own frigates and four tartans have been despatched to the rescue, so I hope they will be able to defend themselves against that great rogue Caracciolo."‡

When the Republic fell, Caracciolo tried to fly, but he was betrayed by a servant. "It was not proved that he was included in the Amnesty, as this only applied to the Republicans who had sought refuge in the castles, or were prisoners in the hands of the Royalists."§

* The Queen to Ruffo *Carteggio della regina M. C. col Card. F. R.* by Maresca. Archivio napoletano, 1880, xxiv, p. 558.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 360.

‡ *Carteggio*, lxxiii, p. 195.

§ Bonnefons, ch. vi, i. This was the explanation given by Hamilton to Lord Grenville in order to account for the summary justice administered to the unfortunate Neapolitan. "Admiral Caracciolo, the chief of the rebels of his Sicilian Majesty's marine, not having been comprised in the cardinal's treaty, but having been taken endeavouring to make his escape by land, was by Lord Nelson's orders tried on board the *Foudroyant* by a court-martial composed entirely of Neapolitan marine officers, was condemned and hung up at the yard-arm of the Neapolitan frigate, the *Minerva* (the very same ship he had, with the gunboats of the Neapolitan Republic under his command, fired upon near Procida)

He no longer inspired sympathy and even Hamilton, whilst demanding that the treaty should be applied in favour of the rebels, showed to Caracciolo no pity. The Court of Naples was afraid of his talents and the support he might give to the enemy. On June 19 the Queen wrote to Ruffo: "The only one among the guilty scoundrels whom I do not wish to go to France is the unworthy Caracciolo; this most ungrateful man knows all the creeks and inlets of the coast of Naples and Sicily (tutte le cale et bucchi), and could molest us greatly; in fact he could endanger the safety of the King—a thing which alarms me."* On June 20 the King himself, who was inspired by the Queen, echoed her words, saying: "To spare these savage vipers, and especially Caracciolo who knows every inlet of our coast line, might inflict the greatest damage on us."†

But if Caracciolo was already a condemned man, there was all the more reason for Nelson to stand aloof from a trial that was bound to have a fatal issue. By what right did the British Admiral intervene in a case which was, so to speak, a personal matter between Ferdinand IV and a subject who had betrayed his allegiance! Could he not have handed him over to the King. who was by right his judge? Why did Nelson throw himself into the conflict? Why did he hasten on the trial?

Other authors have been equally severe in judging Nelson's act. M. Bonnefons writes: "By taking upon himself to avenge the outraged Majesty of the King of the Two Sicilies, Nelson cast an indelible stain on his

at five o'clock in the evening of the same day, where he hung until the setting of the sun, to the great satisfaction of his Sicilian Majesty's loyal subjects, thousands of whom came off in boats with loud applause of so speedy an act of justice." (Gutteridge, p. 313.) Hamilton felt it was necessary to mention the supposed approbation of the nation, in order to make England countenance Nelson's deed.

* Letter of June 19, National Archives of Naples. Gutteridge, No. 49, p. 135.

† Dumas, vol. v, p. 254. Gutteridge, No. 53, p. 141.

name. He thereby placed himself on a level with those vile courtiers of success, who, being destitute of all moral sense, oblivious of all equity, are guided by interest and hatred only. If, strictly speaking, Caracciolo deserved to be prosecuted, the British Admiral had no right to increase his torture. The very fact that Nelson was in a foreign land, and that Caracciolo followed the same calling as he, should have withheld him from interfering. It is difficult to understand that he was not ashamed of deliberately taking the life of a brother-officer. Ferdinand alone had the right to intervene."*

However, it was not the King but the Queen who intervened. Knowing that Lady Hamilton would be abjectly subservient to her slightest whims, by persuading her to influence her lover she made her the instrument of her revenge. On June 25, as has already been stated, she wrote from Palermo, charging Nelson to have recourse to extreme measures in putting down the rebellion. Lady Hamilton exercised all her power in favour of her friend's cruel designs, and thus Nelson became a tool in the hands of these two women, and dishonoured his name by an ignoble crime. As a consequence of his relentless persecution of his victim, Caracciolo's treason is forgotten and he is considered a martyr, whereas the man who constituted himself his judge will always be branded with the shame of having murdered him.

It is now necessary to resume the account of this dark tragedy. Nelson himself chose the officers who were to sit in court-martial and judge the traitor. First amongst these was Count Thurn, who had lately been fighting against the Neapolitan Admiral. Of the five officers, two voted for immediate execution, whilst two proposed that the sentence should not be carried out until the King had made known his pleasure. Thurn had the casting vote, and decided that the execution should take place

* "Under Lady Hamilton's influence this man, who was a hero in battle, became an abject being, capable of committing the basest actions." (A. Bonnefons, ch. vi.)

at five o'clock on the same day (June 29). On this point he had doubtless received Nelson's instructions, for, as we have seen, Hamilton wrote about the death and punishment reserved for the rebel before the trial had even commenced.

Caracciolo's defence seems to have been a very poor one. At the trial he appeared to as little advantage as on the day when he forsook the Sovereign to whom he had sworn allegiance. He pretended that he had been forced into the service of the Republic. There were no proofs to support this assertion. On the contrary, his flight from Sicily was damning evidence against him. Nelson had taken upon himself the power of confirming the sentence and he ordered the execution. However, the part which he played was manifestly so odious that the British officers murmured loudly against him, "showing great agitation and anger."* Their attitude was so marked that Nelson sent them word to cease their discussion, and not mix themselves up in the matter. Nelson even refused to grant a reprieve that might enable the con-

* In the following dispatch written to Acton, whose power he had usurped, Nelson gave an account of the trial.

June 29 1799.

My dear Sir,

As I have not time to send your Excellency the whole case against the miserable Caracciolo, I only tell you that he was sentenced this morning, and that he submitted himself to the just sentence of death pronounced upon him. I send your Excellency my confirmation which was *ad literam* : I confirm the sentence of death pronounced upon Francesco Caracciolo, and the same will be executed on board his Sicilian Majesty's frigate *La Minerva* at 5 o'clock to-day.

Given etc.

Nelson.

Gutteridge, No. 136, p. 278. The original document in Nelson's handwriting has disappeared, though an Italian translation exists. (National Archives of Naples.) Nelson was not speaking truthfully when he stated that Caracciolo had "submitted himself to the just sentence of death pronounced upon him." On the contrary, he never ceased to protest up to the very moment when they placed the rope round his neck.

demned man to receive the help of his religion. The worthy, but placid and passive, Hamilton thus relates to Acton this fresh iniquity and the refinement of cruelty displayed by Nelson.

On board the *Foudroyant*.
June 27 1799

I have just time to add Caracciolo has been condemned by the majority of the court-martial, and Lord Nelson has ordered him for execution this afternoon at 5 o'clock, at the foremast yard-arm of the *Minerva*, and his body thrown into the sea. Thurn represented it was usual to give 24 hours for the care of the soul. Lord Nelson's orders remain the same, although I wished to acquiesce with Thurn's opinion. All is for the best. The other criminals will remain at the mercy of his Sicilian Majesty on board the polaccas—in the midst of our fleet. Lord Nelson's manner of acting must be as his conscience and honour dictate, and I believe his determination will be found best at last. For God's sake let the King come *at least on board the Foudroyant*, and hoist his royal standard if he can. To-morrow we attack the Castle of St. Elmo. God prosper the just cause. The die is cast: we must abide by it as well we can.

Ever yours
W. H.*

This letter requires some explanation. Hamilton is a trusty and loyal witness who always speaks the truth. It is therefore a fact that he asked for a delay of twenty-four hours for the prisoner, and Lord Nelson refused it.†

* Gutteridge, No. 137, page 279, National Archives of Naples.

† M. Fauchier Magnan states that Caracciolo was to be hanged at two o'clock, and that Nelson adjourned the execution until five o'clock, in order to give the criminal time for his devotions. This assertion is inexact for, as it has been stated, in a letter written June 27, Hamilton was able to make known beforehand the sentence that was in store for Caracciolo, the death he was to die, and the hour at which he was to be executed : " Caracciolo will probably be seen hanging at the yardarm of the *Minerva* . . . from daybreak to sunset." (Gutteridge, p. 251.)

It is also certain that Thurn joined in Hamilton's request for, although he had condemned Caracciolo, he did not feel that he had a right to deprive him of a favour that was granted to the worst malefactors.

Unfortunately, Hamilton had not an iron will. Above all, he thought himself absolutely inferior to Nelson, under whose influence he had fallen ever since the victory of the Nile, and he argued that since Nelson had taken such an extraordinary decision he must have reasons for doing so, which there was no need for him, Hamilton,

A letter written by Thurn to Ruffo and published by Sacchinelli, gives an account of the trial and some details on this particular point.

"The sentence having been made known to Admiral Nelson, he confirmed it and ordered that at five o'clock, on the same day, Caracciolo should be hanged from the yardarm and exposed there until sunset. At this hour the rope should be cut, letting the body drop into the sea. At one o'clock this morning I received the said orders. At half-past one, the condemned man, Francesco Caracciolo, was conveyed on board my frigate and taken into chapel. At five o'clock, according to the orders given, the sentence was carried out." (Sacchinelli, p. 266.)

According to this letter, at 1.30 p.m. Caracciolo was removed from the British vessel and conveyed on board the Sicilian frigate, where he was placed in the chapel (*posto in cappella*). But we shall give the account of an eye witnesss who saw Caracciolo leave the *Foudroyant* shortly before dinner, which, according to this same witness, took place at five o'clock. For the following reasons, Count Thurn's account is the least reliable of the two. Thurn who *had pleaded in vain for a reprieve, allowing the condemned man to receive the help of religion, dared not own to a Cardinal that his request had been rejected.* Hamilton's letter on this point, leaves no room for doubt. It may be added that when this anonymous Englishman described Caracciolo as starting for the *Minerva*, falling on his knees and beseeching, he does not mention that any priest was near him. Had a priest heard the confession of the condemned prisoner, he would have accompanied him to the gallows, therefore he would have been by his side at that moment, endeavouring to comfort him. The Englishman would have seen him and would have mentioned his presence. But none of the witnesses speak of a priest having appeared on the scene at any time. Consequently, it must be concluded that none attended the victim.

Thurn was rewarded for his guilty complaisance. On June 30, Nelson wrote to the King; "Count Thurn acquits himself very much to my satisfaction."

to understand. Therefore, "all was for the best!" His mind was so pliable and his will so weak that he had no sooner traced these words of approbation than he regretted them. He felt that he must at least try to explain why Nelson had been brought to break all the rules of civilised nations, and why he himself appeared to uphold him. It was a difficult task, for, in truth, he had no reasons whatever to put forward. He trusted Nelson. Why should not his correspondent Acton, and the Neapolitan Government, put the same faith in the British Admiral. "Lord Nelson's manner of acting must be as his conscience and honour dictate." With this stifled regret of a timorous soul, the protest ended and no more was said.

Any system of absolute power is dangerous, but in this case the crime could not be attributed to an abuse of power, but to an anonymous Government, a system which is even more dangerous, because no definite person can be made responsible for its deeds. The hidden, nameless power that ordered the massacres of St Bartholomew and the September Massacres has never been revealed. It was due to some unknown power that Carnot delivered up Danton, Camille and Lucile Desmoulins to Robespierre, and to this day history has not discovered who ordered the hostages to be shot down during the Commune. The incendiaries who set Paris ablaze would have remained hidden but that, by chance, Ferré's autograph came to light. And Ferré, moreover, had no right to give the order, *Faites de suite flamber Finances.*

In the midst of the anarchy that reigned in Naples, everyone had a word to say. Nelson gave orders, Hamilton interceded, and Count Thurn followed in his footsteps. What, then, was the all-powerful Emma doing, she who had been the Queen's mouthpiece and was Nelson's companion on board the *Foudroyant*! Why did she not join her prayers to those of Hamilton? By siding with him at such a moment, by uttering words of

womanly pity, she would have proved that she was a true woman! The vices of womankind she had, but none of the virtues. These swift hours, full of gloomy tragedy, were to see the decision of Caracciolo's fate. He was indeed guilty, but excited interest inasmuch as he had been unfortunate, and was the victim of events that had turned out differently from what he had expected. His personality excited interest also, because he was well-known to all those who had to decide his fate, and his sudden and terrible end moved not only those who sought to save him, but also those who were indifferent to him. In these tragic circumstances, why did Emma conceal her feelings? Why did she remain silent?

It seems that she had not been quite inactive. According to Captain Brenton, author of a *History of Great Britain from* 1793 *to* 1832, it was at this time that Lady Hamilton uttered those cruel words: "Come, Brontë, let us take the barge and have another look at that poor Caracciolo." The writer adds that a boat was lowered, and the lovers were rowed over to the frigate, to look once more on the corpse hanging from the yard-arm. Later on, he asserts, the memory of this ghastly sight filled Emma with remorse, and she spoke of it at the hour of death. The pitiful corpse was always present to her mind, and she could not bear to be left in darkness. This evidence is all the more interesting as it comes from an English writer.

Mrs Gamlin, however, rejects Captain Brenton's testimony with indignation. She maintains that the angelic Emma felt no remorse and that the Captain's account is evidently absurdly false since he calls Nelson "Brontë," which title Ferdinand had not yet granted to the Admiral. Mrs Gamlin lays great stress on this detail,* which is, however, worthless. A historian may easily make a mistake about the rank or title conferred on a person. Even those whom it concerns most closely are liable to fall into error. Thus, on one occasion,

* For the same reasons, von Helfert rejects the anecdote.

Fouché was relating an anecdote about the Terror and said that Robespierre had once addressed him as: "Duc d'Otrante!" This lapse is far more serious than that of Captain Brenton.

However, as his testimony is not corroborated by any other author, it may be set aside. Other proofs must be brought forward. They are all more worthy of attention, as Mrs Gāmlin has quoted them extensively. These details, which are drawn from the diary of an Englishman who had taken refuge on board the *Foudroyant*, bear the unmistakeable stamp of truth. This diary has already been mentioned in the preceding pages; more valuable and interesting details follow.

The author of this diary seems to have occupied a good position and was personally acquainted with Nelson. He first states that when the trial began Nelson told him that neither he nor any officer on board could speak Italian and that, as he was anxious to follow the debate, he begged him to go and assist at the trial. The writer complied, but Count Thurn, who presided over the court-martial, requested all the foreigners to withdraw. As the writer himself was turned out, this is at least one guarantee that his account may be relied upon.

The author next learnt the sentence and saw the British officers "speaking strongly and openly against the decision." It has been said that Caracciolo had first been sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, but that Nelson had exacted a death sentence.* This assertion must not be taken into account, because it is contradicted by this witness, who declares that the votes were two against three. Hamilton, who is no less trustworthy, states that Caracciolo was condemned by a majority. This is also borne out by Count Thurn in the letter already quoted.

The English writer then goes on to describe the pitiful scene that followed:

"Shortly afterwards, whilst several officers, with myself, were pacing the deck, waiting for the dinner hour,

* Colletta and Bonnefons.

Caracciolo was brought up from below, chained and guarded, to be transferred to the *Minerva*, a Neapolitan frigate, where the execution was to take place. On seeing the officers and myself, to most of whom he was perfectly known, he threw himself into a supplicating attitude, and, almost kneeling, implored for mercy, and said, in Italian: 'I have not been fairly tried,' or words to that effect. But no notice, under the circumstances of the case, could be taken by any officer not supreme in command, and he was hurried away by the officer who had him in charge."*

The faint-heartedness of Caracciolo as here described by this witness, corresponds exactly with what is already known of his attitude when before his judges. The writer and the officers pitied him sincerely, but none dared to raise a voice against Nelson the dictator.

Now, Lady Hamilton is mentioned twice in the course of this most veracious account. On the first occasion, the author quotes a remark which she addressed to him: "Well Mr ——, we have most important news for you. That arch-traitor, Caracciolo, is taken."†

Lady Hamilton appears a second time, precisely at the moment when Caracciolo was about to be executed. At the appointed hour, during dinner, at which Nelson, Hamilton and Emma were present, a shot was suddenly fired. Immediately Lady Hamilton rose from her chair and, lifting her glass, exclaimed: "Thank God, that shot announces the doom of a traitor."

Is there any reason for supposing that Emma did not utter these cruel words? They were the expression of a cold heart and servile mind, always ready to curry favour with the great and flatter the evil passions of the King and Queen of Naples. In all ages there have been women noted for their total lack of feeling. Mme. de Sévigné's heart was full of love for her daughter, and yet, without

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 109-110.

† Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

a shudder, she could describe the atrocious means whereby the Duc d'Aiguillon repressed the rebels in Brittany. Did not the women of her day go in crowds to witness the execution of Mme. de Brinvilliers, and later on just as many flocked together to see the head of the unfortunate Lally-Tollendal fall, and to watch unlucky Favras dangling from the gallows. In 1789 the wild viragoes of Caen enacted scenes of cannibalism round the dead body of young Belzunce. The beautiful Théroigne de Méricourt urged madmen to murder Suleau; the grim *tricoteuses* of the Faubourg St Antoine hatched their bloody plan, whilst their sisters were known by a hideous name: *lés lécheuses de guillotine*. During the Restoration women displayed the same cynical ferocity and the Court ladies, rivals of the *tricoteuses*, clamoured for the death of Marshal Ney and M. de la Valette. In England, although there was more moderation and refinement, the feminine character could be just as savage, when not modified by a sound moral education. Queen Elizabeth was not the only woman who thirsted for blood.

However, another eye-witness, Augustus Collins or Collier, who was one of the guests at the memorable dinner denies the above assertion. He maintains that not only did Lady Hamilton not rise from her chair or give the toast, but that during these gloomy days she shut herself up in her cabin and only appeared at meals.

At first, in the face of such contrary evidence, it seems impossible to form a judgment; and yet it can be done. From all that has been previously stated, it appears that Emma was a selfish creature, callous to everything that did not affect her personally. When she gave way to spontaneous emotions, they were generally bad ones; but, being obsequious and servile in her intercourse with the great, she always shared their opinion and was ready to fulfil all their wishes.

The exclamation, "Come, Brontë, etc.," and the anecdote about the lovers being rowed out in a barge to gloat on the victim's corpse, may be eliminated, not that they

appear improbable, but because they are not sufficiently substantiated by proofs. Moreover, had Emma expressed a desire to go and gaze on the dead Caracciolo, some remnant of self-respect would probably have caused Nelson to reject her proposal. And yet it is not certain. Such women as Emma are particularly happy when they can prevent the man who loves them, and who is like wax between their fingers, from fulfilling his duty or bearing himself honourably and with proper dignity. As they are only guided by their caprices, they cannot understand such considerations, and have no rest until they have dragged the man—be he husband or lover—down to their own level. When they have accomplished this feat, they are exultant and, in the hardness of their hearts, they tyrannise over him, crush his energy and dominate him as though he were a boy. "I had a hundred times more sense than she and yet she overwhelmed me," wrote Benjamin Constant of one of his wives or mistresses. It is not a matter of intelligence, but of character. Nelson was Emma's humble slave. He did not see Caracciolo during or after the trial; he had no reason for seeing him.* When his mistress asked to be taken out to see the gallows, he might have answered that it would be an improper proceeding. But, after all, he had already committed many improper actions. However, let it be said once more, he may not have had any occasion to refuse her request, for it is not proved that she ever asked to be taken on this ghastly excursion.

As for the other assertions, it is certain that Lady Hamilton said to the Englishman who kept the diary: "Well, Mr ——, we have most important news for you. That arch-traitor, Caracciolo, is taken. He was found concealed in a ditch, and is now on board this vessel awaiting his trial, which Lord Nelson has appointed to take place at one o'clock to-day. Will you be there?"† She showed her

* Clarke and MacArthur, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 185.

† Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

real self on that day. She gave voice to the hatred of the enemy of her friend the Queen. There was nothing to influence her in another direction. But when the man she was speaking to showed some pity for the victim, she did not continue, but broke off the conversation. She did not like discussions, and could not admit having her opinion crossed.

It now remains to be considered whether she really proposed a toast when the cannon was fired. The anonymous second-hand witness affirms that she did; Collins, the eye-witness, denies it. The latter must be credited, though with certain reservations, for all testimony has not the same value; it must first be weighed. Collins, who was one of Nelson's officers, knew that by defending Emma he would have the approval of his superior. Here again, however, one is inclined to believe the nameless witness, who has been so truthful throughout his account. It is a fact that he was not present at the time, but he heard of the incident through one of the guests, a servant, or some other eye-witness. By being repeated so many times, the exact details were distorted. The first witness had said that when the cannon was fired, Lady Hamilton exclaimed: "Thank God, that gun announces the doom of a traitor." Hence someone else concluded she had given a toast, but when this was repeated to Collins, who was at the dinner table with her, he could answer in all sincerity: "No, she did not rise from her chair. She did not give a toast." All these facts concur. Collins is quite right in maintaining that Emma did not act in the theatrical way attributed to her by the anonymous writer, who had the information from an exaggerated account. But Collins does not affirm that she remained silent. She said something. She muttered between her pretty teeth: "Thank God! We are rid of a traitor." She made this barbarous remark deliberately, because she knew that it would go straight to Nelson's heart. The ominous silence of his officers, as well as Thurn's and Hamilton's intervention in favour

of a reprieve, had made him uneasy, and he was in need of encouragement. Emma seldom did anything without a set purpose.

It was also an interested motive that prompted her to show herself in quite a different light to Marie-Caroline. The Queen now hated "this miserable Caracciolo . . . this rascal," and not without cause; but the traitor belonged to a princely family and was loved by the King. There was no knowing but that this fantastical Sovereign might show mercy to the most guilty of the rebels.* It was therefore expedient to guard against such a possibility. Consequently in Palermo Emma had shown a generous disposition,† whereas on board the *Foudroyant* she was relentless.‡ In all circumstances, she was the performer of Attitudes.

It would almost seem that she herself was embarrassed by the double game she was playing, for she became silent, and only appeared in public for meals. She seemed to be hiding, in order to avoid the last prayer of a con-

* As it has been seen, the King had, on the contrary, impressed on his emissaries, that they were not to show pity to Caracciolo. But his feelings were not known to everyone. In a letter written by Acton to Nelson, a singular sentence occurs whereby he expresses the hope that Caracciolo and his adherents would have received a fitting reward before the arrival of his Majesty (see Eg. MSS. 2640 f. 309). Why were the rebels to be punished before the King reached Naples? Acton belonged to the Queen, and, as he knew she wished Caracciolo to perish, he adopted the same opinion. Moreover, without any fear of being unjust, it may be stated that he entertained a feeling of personal rancour against the man who had betrayed the Government, of which he, Acton, was Prime Minister, and the corrupt practices of which formed the basis of his power. It would thus appear that Acton feared the King might be suddenly inclined to show mercy.

† "I beg of you," wrote the Queen, "silence your kind heart and think only of the evils they have done, and are still ready to commit." (July 6, Eg. MSS. 1616, f. 42.)

‡ Only a few days before, on June 17, believing her to be goodness personified, her husband had written to the lover that "poor Emma . . . has no other fault than that of too much sensibility." *O pectora coeca.* (Add. MSS. 34912, f. 34.)

demned man. Following the promptings of her reason, rather than any generous impulse, she had caused the treaty to be respected, although she was acquainted with the Queen's intentions, and knew she was opposed to all clemency. She now wished to please Marie-Caroline and, perhaps, Nelson also, therefore she showed herself unmerciful. The proof is to be found in a somewhat mysterious letter from Marie-Caroline which, although it gives no precise details, shows clearly that Emma played an active part in this drama. On July 2 she wrote: "I have seen also the sad and merited end of that unfortunate and mad-brained Caracciolo. I am sensible how much your excellent heart must have suffered, which increases my sense of gratitude to you."*

Why should the Queen write that she was sensible how much her excellent heart had suffered! She did so because she fully realised what an odious mission she had imposed on her friend when she begged her to influence Nelson. At any price, she must obtain the death of this traitor, this scoundrel. Through Emma's power over Nelson, she had obtained prompt satisfaction. Acton's letter to Nelson proves that he had anticipated this event. By these means the matter was settled, and the vindictive Sovereign had no longer any cause to fear that, at the last moment, the King might be inclined to show mercy to a man he had loved, and whom he valued as a sailor and a warrior.

By writing these words: "I am sensible how much your excellent heart must have suffered," the Queen acknowledges Emma's intervention. She wished to flatter her sensibility, which, by the way, she did not possess, for it was not a mission to be imposed on any human being, and Marie-Caroline believed Emma must have suffered at having to solicit punishment and not forgiveness, which would have been more becoming in a woman.

Why should the Queen wind up the words, "which

* Pettigrew, vol. i, p. 260.

increases my sense of gratitude," unless she meant to recognise that through Emma's influence Nelson had been brought to intervene in the Neapolitan struggle and condemn unmercifully a man whose life would have endangered the tranquillity of the Sovereigns of Naples!

Finally, from the cautious tone of her letter, it is evident that she wished it to be understood by her correspondent only, and convey nothing should it fall into other hands.

Not only does this letter establish Emma's intervention, but it also accounts for her remaining in her cabin. Either she was overcome with shame and remorse, or else she wished to escape from all solicitations during those fearful days.* As will be seen later on, it also explains Nelson's relentless conduct.

It has been asserted that Nelson hastened on Caracciolo's trial and execution because he feared the Neapolitan sailors might rise up and defend their former chief. For this reason he had him tried on board the British flagship.† According to Colletta, who was an eye-witness, the impression was that Nelson had seized Caracciolo only to be able to save him. Such a thought would have been worthy of a truly noble heart. It was notorious that Caracciolo was guilty; a foreign power only could save him from his doom. It was generally believed that he wanted to save a brave man, who had so often been his companion in peril, by land and by sea. The conqueror's generosity was praised. But, misguided by an unlucky star and his blind love, Nelson had been dragged down to a deed of shame. He only wanted to get his rival

* Repeatedly, the Queen thanked Emma for having been the instrument whereby her wishes were accomplished. On July 18, she wrote: "I can imagine how uncomfortable you must be on board a ship, and this increases my endless gratitude." And speaking of some of the rebels, she added: "So, I beg of you not to grant any particular favours." Emma was most certainly the Queen's executioner and Nelson her assistant.

† According to Clarke and MacArthur.

into his power so as to satisfy his vengeance,* or rather that of the Queen.

Although von Helfert is a zealous defender of Nelson and his mistress, he relates two anecdotes concerning Caracciolo's death which do them but little credit. According to his account, Caracciolo sent Lieutenant Parkinson, in whose charge he was, to intercede for him. He first besought Lady Hamilton to plead for him. Then he asked Nelson to allow him to be shot instead of being hanged. (Von Helfert relates these two appeals in the reverse order, but it is more natural to suppose that Caracciolo asked for his life before choosing by what means he would die.) But Lady Hamilton was not to be found on the quarter-deck, and so events followed their course.† Nelson was furious with the officer who dared to plead that Caracciolo might die a soldier's death, and cried out: "Go, Sir, and attend to your duty." Nelson had lost all control over himself, for in the bottom of his heart he was dissatisfied with himself, and his conscience was uneasy. Was it the duty of a British Admiral to cause an Italian Admiral to be hanged?

Later on, Nelson heaped favours on Parkinson, no

* Colletta, *op. cit.* vol. v, ch. i. Colletta gives an explanation of this thirst for revenge, but we agree with M. von Helfert (*Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 7) in finding it a ridiculous one. According to the Italian, Nelson was jealous of the praise that had been bestowed on Caracciolo during the flight to Sicily. "During the tempest it had been noticed how well the Neapolitan vessel, commanded by Caracciolo, progressed through the heavy sea. Although he might have sailed ahead, he remained near the King's vessel in order to give him courage and assistance. Whereas the other ships obeyed the winds, Caracciolo's vessel sailed so proudly that it seemed to command the elements. The King noticed this and expressed his admiration, thereby arousing fierce jealousy in Nelson's heart." (Colletta, *op. cit.* iii, ch. xi.)

† *Fabrizio Ruffo*, p. 353. Concerning this appeal to Emma, Botta speaks with terrible severity, he says: "Emma did not allow herself to be found," *Ma Emma Lionna non si lascea trovare* (xviii). She did not want to be asked to intercede for the man who had been condemned at her instigation.

doubt hoping by these means to induce him to be silent concerning this tragic incident. On July 16 he sent him to England with dispatches for Lord Spencer, to whom he recommended him most warmly. "Lieutenant Parkinson will, I am sure, meet with your kind protection, he is an officer of great merit."* And Parkinson was forthwith made Commodore! He could have been a dangerous witness before the Admiralty and the public. But how could he help being grateful towards a superior, —and he the illustrious conqueror of Aboukir Bay,— who bought his silence by such favours!

Nelson's conduct was atrocious! Even his defenders fail to explain it, and get out of the difficulty by saying it was inexplicable. Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas says: "Lord Nelson's motive for ordering the immediate execution of Caracciolo is unknown; but the magnitude and notoriety of his crime, and the supposed necessity, from the state of Naples, of an immediate example, seem the most probable cause."† These various reasons would be very sound indeed had Nelson been chief of the police in Naples, a great judge, or a Neapolitan general endowed with full powers. But he had none of these qualifications. He was in a foreign land, and his interference was an unwarrantable proceeding. Indeed, it would be absolutely incomprehensible but for the boundless influence exercised over him by his mistress, the friend of the Queen, and the docile instrument of her passions.

In 1815, when the combined efforts of Europe overthrew Napoleon, whose power had not been recognised, Louis XVIII being the legitimate Sovereign, all the French were rebels. And yet no general, no minister, no foreign ruler committed the smallest act of violence against these rebels. On the contrary, they gave them shelter in their states, and, later on, received the proscribed regicide *Conventionnels*, just as they had harboured the *émigrés* in former days.

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 406.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, Appendix p. 504.

No one has ever been able to comprehend Nelson's cruel behaviour, and, it must be said, he himself never explained it. Since he tried to deceive England concerning the reasons that made him violate the treaty, it must have been that these motives were not such as do honour to a man. As it was impossible to give any explanation with regard to Caracciolo's trial, he did not attempt to justify his conduct on this point. He did not wish to confess that he had committed these dishonourable actions at the instigation of a woman; that he had caused the death of the Neapolitan Admiral solely because he wanted to please his mistress, who in her turn sought to satisfy the Queen, her friend. In the face of such a surrender of conscience and character, or rather such dastardly cowardice, the weakness of human nature is terrifying. It is no less alarming to realise the ferocious spirit that slumbers within the human animal, and which, at the call of passion, may suddenly break loose.

Hamilton, who was accustomed to diplomatic negotiations, endeavoured to justify Nelson in his letter of July 27, saying that such an example was necessary for the future welfare of the navy of his Sicilian Majesty. In his letter to Lord Grenville he pleaded extenuating circumstances. Nelson ordered the execution, but gave no reason for his action. The depth of his pride and unconsciousness appeared in the disdainful words he wrote to Acton in his letter of June 29, and in which he took upon himself the authority that belonged to Acton only. Even so, he gave no explanations. Nelson was not like Danton, who boldly declared: "I looked my crime in the face and I committed it." Nor did he resemble Napoleon, who said: "I had the Duke d'Enghien shot at a time when the Duke d'Artois was supporting five hundred assassins in Paris." Nelson was neither a Danton nor a Buonaparte. He was guided by instinct, not by reason. This is why some contemporaries were justified in saying that in some respects he was a mere child.

All men are guided by instinct before they reach the age when they follow the dictates of reason. The defeat of Buonaparte's first hero, Paoli, embittered him, and for a while the young Corsican was full of hatred and violently opposed to France. Later on, reason taught him that in France his ambition would reap a plentiful harvest. But Nelson never got beyond the age of instinct.

Palumbo supposes that his head was turned after Aboukir, and that, intoxicated by the honours showered on him on all sides, he believed he had a right to act on his sole authority.* This observation is clever, and to some extent correct, considering Nelson's somewhat primitive nature. It requires, however, to be supplemented by one other remark. From this moment Nelson became still more the creature of instinct and blind impulse, for it was after Aboukir that his mistress established her empire over him. This does not exonerate Caracciolo's murderer. Sir James Mackintosh declared: "The execution of Caracciolo is an act which I forbear to characterise."† Even Mr Gutteridge, who is a passionate defender of the Admiral, forsakes him at this juncture: "The only matter in issue is whether Nelson showed undue severity towards Caracciolo—a question on which opinions will always differ."‡ That is all, and the learned Englishman passes on.

Palumbo furnishes one more detail, but quotes no authority. He relates that when Nelson was dying at Trafalgar he implored his faithful friend, Captain Hardy, not to allow his body to be buried at sea: "Justice of God!" exclaims the Italian historian. "Who can doubt but that, as his life ebbed away, the tragic fate of his

* Prefazione x.

† *Life of Sir James Mackintosh*, vol. i, p. 137. Cacciatore, the worthy royalist, expressed the same sentiment: "Concerning Caracciolo, I will say that, by reason of his felony, he deserved death, but Nelson's hatred caused him to hurry on the execution, and thus made it impossible for the King to exercise mercy." *Op. cit.*, vol. i.

‡ Gutteridge, Introduction, p. x.

rival, Caracciolo, appeared to him in all its horror, and he saw the corpse floating on the waters of the Bay of Naples."*

The King had not yet done with the unfortunate Caracciolo. On the morning after his arrival on board the *Foudroyant*, as he was proceeding with his toilet in front of the port-hole of his cabin, his eyes wandered over the Bay, when he suddenly perceived some strange object floating towards him on the sea, and as it drew nearer, it proved to be a human form. It was the corpse of a man, whose head and shoulders emerged from the water. The dead man was Caracciolo. His wide-open eyes seemed to gaze at the King, and his hands were clasped as if in the attitude of prayer. The King was so upset and horrified by this ghastly apparition that, without stopping to finish dressing, he burst into the next cabin, which was occupied by Hamilton: "Monsieur Hamilton!" shrieked the Prince, "I have just seen—I have just seen Caracciolo!"

The Ambassador looked out. The sight that met his gaze was so terribly uncanny that, although he possessed more coolness than Ferdinand and had less cause to feel remorse, he was for a moment dumbfounded. "But what does this dead man want with me?" asked the King. The Englishman having recovered his senses, replied: "Sire, it is true that this is Caracciolo, and that this man was guilty of high treason towards your Majesty. Nevertheless, he was a good Christian, and it would seem that he has reappeared to beg for Christian burial." "You are right," said the King; "let him have it." The body was taken on board, and buried after a religious ceremony. One of Nelson's worst crimes had been disavowed but not atoned for.

Von Helfert's version of this romantic incident is a much simpler one. Captain Hardy, Commander of the *Foudroyant*, having been informed that Caracciolo's body was floating on the water, informed the King, who

* Prefazione, xiii.

ordered him to have the corpse buried. It is possible that the body was first seen by a look-out man, and the two accounts may complement each other. As the King was dressing, the incident must have ocurred in the morning. Hardy informed him of what had occurred, so that he should not be startled. In any case, the apparition of the corpse risen from the depths of the sea wove a legend around Caracciolo's name. Had not the dead man, who perished unshriven, come out of his watery grave, to claim a religious burial, and protest against the barbarous cruelty of those who had in the hour of death deprived him of the help of religion. The painter Ettore Cercone has represented this scene according to popular fancy, that is to say, with a display of ceremony not compatible with the disorder that reigns early in the morning. The King is standing on deck, alone with his son, who hides his face from the ghastly spectacle. For some unknown reason the legend makes a priest appear on the scene, and he advises the King to grant burial to the corpse. Certainly, a priest was qualified to take such a step, but Hamilton could make the suggestion also, for had he not pleaded in vain that the comfort of religion should be granted to the condemned man. Moreover, he was the first person that the King was likely to meet; for, on board an English vessel the state rooms are distributed according to rank, therefore the cabins of the British Ambassador, and of the guests of the *Foudroyant*, must have been near the royal apartment. The Admiral's state-room would have been the farthest away. For these reasons the above stated version must be considered as the most likely.*

The phenomenon itself must now be explained. Caracciolo's corpse had been thrown into the sea, weighted

* According to M. Fauchier Magnan, Hamilton was asked to tell the King of the apparition of the corpse. Referring to this subject, Palumbo states that Ferdinand remarked smilingly that Caracciolo had come to sue for pardon. When the first emotion was over, Ferdinand may have spoken in this way. It would be just what one might expect from such a man.

with fifty-two pounds of shot. As the body became inflated, the weight no longer sufficed to keep it down. The corpse rose to the surface and, by some effort of equilibrium, the bust emerged from the water, adding thus to the horror of the apparition. The clasped hands indicate no doubt that the condemned man had said a prayer as he was being executed.

Before closing this chapter, in which the reader has been spared the account of the bloody reprisals that darkened Naples,* it is necessary to consider how this work of hatred affected its chief upholders, Marie-Caroline, Nelson, Lady Hamilton.

In one sense, it is a relief to the human conscience, to be able to say that nothing remains of this bloody work; its effects vanished in a few years. It is impossible to lay any foundations by means of violence. Such measures are above all dangerous in a monarchy. A Republic may be relentless without being exposed to the same disadvantages, for it governs as a body, and its members are nameless. But in a monarchy, where the prince has come into his own again, how is he to meet the mute reproachful glances of the relations of his victims? Five

* It is only just to refute, on this point, a passage in the *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, and to clear Lady Hamilton of one terrible accusation. "Order had been re-established," says Chateaubriand. "The Lazzaroni no longer played ball with skulls for the amusement of Nelson and Lady Hamilton" (vol. iv, p. 433.) The Lazzaroni may have played with the heads of the victims, but it was certainly not for the benefit of the lovers, as, for various reasons, they never came on shore during this bloody period. Nevertheless, although Emma was not in Naples, her influence was felt there. Signor Diomede Marinelli wrote what he witnessed. This unpublished manuscript of his diary is in the National Library at Naples. He says: "The horrors of plunder, massacre and licentiousness have reached such a pitch that it is impossible for me to describe. The lowest rabble—otherwise called San Fedists—vie with each other in inventing new tortures, or some worse obscenity. At the instigation of Lady Hamilton, a woman of quality endured the most atrocious outrages. She was stripped of her clothes and whipped on a public square, and then abandoned to the bestial populace." (Diomede Marinelli manuscript, vol. ii, National Library in Naples. A. Gagnière, *op. cit.*, p. 196).

members of the great house of the Pignatelli, three prelates, many women such as Eleonora Pimentel, Luisa San Felice, had perished. There had been ninety-nine death sentences. Duke Monteleone was only saved by the intercession of Pope Pius VI. A family of bankers, the Piatti,* was entirely exterminated,and, of course, their property confiscated. The Queen did not dare to return to Naples. When at length, she came back to her palace, she was obliged to hear names that had belonged to the condemned. On January 15, 1803, she wrote to Vienna: "The King has granted a general pardon and has, with paternal eagerness, allowed all the criminals guilty of high treason to return to Court, without any exception." Marie-Caroline had not willingly consented to this decision: "It was necessary," she wrote, "as the number of guilty was too great, and, by being kept in banishment would have raised too much enmity against the crown." (February 19.)

Even this concession did not redeem the past. "Her reputation was irretrievably compromised. Throughout Europe and even in the states that were the most deeply imbued with the anti-French policy, her treachery and cruelty awakened a feeling of horror."† Napoleon's troops turned her out of Naples once more. She sought refuge in Sicily, but could not agree with the English, her last defenders, for they had dared to ask her to grant a constitution to the island. This was a fresh outrage against the royal prerogative, against its privileges, and the honour of the crown. The English were as odious as Ruffo, and the whole world had betrayed her, she thought. Although she was a very clever woman, pride led her into the most foolish actions. At length she was kept as a sort of prisoner, and then exiled. Finally, she left her kingdom never to return. She was seen at Corfu, at Constantinople, at Odessa, and eventually in

* Domenico Piatti had been a member of the Republican Municipality; Antonio Piatti, Commissioner of the National Treasury.

† A. Bonnefons, *op. cit.* ch. vii.

Austria. A last punishment awaited her in her fatherland.

Napoleon's Empire had collapsed. The exiled Kings returned, and ascended their thrones once more. But Ferdinand had to content himself with Sicily, as his rival Murat had cleverly abandoned Napoleon, and his wife, Caroline Buonaparte, was on very good terms with Metternich. Was is possible that a former groom was to be allowed to remain on the throne of Naples! Such behaviour on the part of the Kings, her brethren, astounded Marie-Caroline. She spent her time traversing the ante-chambers of the Congress in Vienna, begging the sovereigns to dispossess Murat, and replace her on the throne. It only meant violating another treaty! But one day, a report, true or false, reached her that the Emperor of Russia, an all-powerful member of the Congress had set aside her claims saying: "At a moment when we are considering the interests of nations, we cannot give the throne of Naples back to a butcher king." Thus Marie-Caroline was judged and condemned by a sovereign.*

These words dealt her a mortal blow. A few days later, on September 7, 1814, she was found dead at the Castle

* Cacciatore, (*op. cit.*, iii), does not believe that Alexander made this remark, but attributes it to the Duc de Richelieu, which establishes the fact that it was the expression of the general feeling. It is reported that when he met Marie-Caroline at Odessa, in 1813, and heard her express the hope of returning to Naples, he said to her: "But how can your Majesty return to Naples after the events of 1799?" "I see," replied the Queen, "that you, who of all people, should have done me justice, have allowed yourself to be influenced by the calumnies of my vile enemies. During the year that was so fatal to my family, I made every effort in my power to resist the advice given to the King by Acton, Hamilton and Nelson, never wearying of imploring mercy for San Felice, and Caracciolo . . ." Marie-Caroline was telling a most bare-faced lie. In the first place, we know by Hamilton's letters that the Ambassador wanted the treaty to be respected, or at least, that he shared Ruffo's views on the subject. Secondly, the Queen's own letter to Emma leaves no doubt as to her sentiments regarding "the sad and well-merited end of that madman Caracciolo." Thirdly, in other letters, she impresses on Lady Hamilton that Naples must be treated like a rebel Irish town,

of Hatzendorf. Her mouth was distorted by a stifled cry; one hand pointed towards the bell she had not been able to reach. She had died in despair, and abandoned by her peers. It seemed that even after her death, her relations wished to disown her, for the Emperor of Austria, her nephew and son-in-law,* forbade them to wear mourning, so as not to interrupt the festivities connected with the Congress. King Ferdinand hastened to replace her, and, fifty days after receiving news of her death, he married Lucia Migliaccio, the widow of Prince Partanna. The mockery of fate dealt to Marie-Caroline one more blow. The only tribute of respect that she received after her death was paid to her by an enemy. When Murat heard of her decease, he was giving an entertainment in honour of the Princess of Wales, at the Palace in Portici. "As his dignity did not permit him to show any satisfaction at the death of an enemy, he and his wife withdrew, and the fête came to an end."†

Nelson had a sublime end! He died gloriously, in the midst of victory. He had destroyed the fleet of the hereditary foe. In the morning he had said: "England expects every man to do his duty," and in the evening, as he lay dying in his glory, he repeated: "I have done my duty." And it was true. But Nelson did not pass away serenely and peacefully as Epaminondas at Mantinea; as Gustavus Adolphus at Lutzen; as Desaix at Marengo, and all those who are not burdened by a hidden unspoken

with the greatest firmness, strength, vigour and severity. From the fact that the Duc de Richelieu made the remark he did, it does not follow that Alexander refrained from all comment. One thing, however, is certain. At the time of Marie-Caroline's death, there was no question of a restoration in Naples, and on this point, Cacciatore makes a great mistake when he says: "*sul finire appunto dell' anno* 1814, *quando il re Ferdinando era già dal Congresso di Vienna reintegrato.*"

Ferdinand did not recover his throne till 1815, and might never have returned to Naples, had it not been for Murat madly taking up arms.

* He was no longer her son-in-law, as his first wife had died and he had married again.

† Colletta, *op. cit.*, vii, ch. iv.

thought. He died in great mental anguish, because he was tormented by the memory of two beings whom he loved above all things in the world: Lady Hamilton and Horatia, the child she had borne him. The blow that struck him was all the more cruel, as it made him suffer in his highest feelings—as a lover and as a father. He bequeathed Lady Hamilton to England. But England could not honour both the mistress and the legitimate wife, since the latter was blameless, and Nelson knew that this could not be.

As for Lady Hamilton, the following pages will show whether the crime of 1799 was to bring her good fortune.

CHAPTER XII

The victor's rejoicings—Nelson Duke of Bronte—The *Fête* of September 3—Lady Hamilton receives the Order of Malta—Sir William Hamilton's return—Lady Hamilton's letter to Greville—The departure from Naples—Lady Hamilton in Leghorn—Vienna and Saxony.

FOR a short time at least, the Neapolitan sovereigns, Nelson and Lady Hamilton, believed that they had crushed the Revolution. They mistook violence for strength, vengeance and cruelty for energy and firmness of mind. Their enemies had perished. They were triumphant. Neither this daughter of the Cæsars, nor the sailor, nor the woman of Attitudes, had ever opened a book on philosophy or even on history. So they could not know that the ideas for which the patriots had died still lived, ready to spring up from their ashes stronger for the ordeal through which they had passed. In our days, Naples has erected a monument to the Martyrs who fell in the cause of liberty. Four lions surround a slender column. Their different attitudes symbolise the four insurrections that took place in 1799, 1820, 1848, and 1860. Three of the lions lie wounded, the fourth stands erect, uttering a roar of triumph. The allegory is a perfectly true one. The four rebellions against the Bourbons were inspired by the same aspirations and the same hearts, for the places left by those who fell in 1799 were filled up by their sons or their relations. King Charles III had been popular because he freed Naples from the Austrian yoke. At first his son Ferdinand IV reaped the benefit of his father's

success, and was the people's symbol of national independence. His unfortunate marriage robbed him, however, of much of his popularity, for the nation felt that the Habsburgs still wished to dominate Naples. Moreover, coming from the proudest and most aristocratic Court of Europe, the Queen was an ardent advocate of the Divine Right of Kings, a fact which disgusted the Italians. The little liberty that existed under the Bourbons was endangered; the last privileges of the Senate and of the Magistrature, were suppressed after the Revolution of 1799. Marie-Caroline believed that, at the very moment when France was calling all the nations to claim their freedom, she would succeed in exercising a despotic power such as Naples had never endured. She was to be the first victim of this fatal error.

At first she was not conscious of the mistake she had made. Her principal preoccupation was to reward those who had served her cause. Nelson received the duchy of Brontë with estates that should have brought him a yearly income of 18,000 ducats, but the penury of the Neapolitan treasury, and the events that occurred in Italy prevented him from enjoying this revenue. Although he had a weakness for honours and money, it appears that at first he refused to accept the title and the pension. This singular attitude can only be explained by the supposition that he feared to displease his Government by accepting rewards for political services which Britain had not approved of and which, moreover, bound him to a foreign sovereign. He had already done too much for the King of Naples. He had been reproved by the Admiralty for putting his men at the disposal of the King for service that separated them from the fleet:

"Their Lordships by no means approve of the seamen being landed to form a part of an Army to be employed in operations at a distance from the coast, where, if they should have the misfortune to be defeated, they might be prevented from returning to the Ships, and the Squadron

be thereby rendered so defective, as to be no longer capable of performing the services required of it."* In answer to Nelson's explanations, the Admiralty replied: "Their Lordships do not, therefore, from any information now before them, see sufficient reason to justify your having disobeyed the orders you had received from your Commanding Officer."†

It was well that the Admiralty checked Nelson, who had shown by what dangerous principles he was guided. Nelson knew it, and was on his guard. However, the King and, it is asserted, Lady Hamilton over-ruled his objections and he accepted the Neapolitan duchy. "Do you want your own name to be covered with glory, whilst mine would bear the stain of not having acknowledged your services," said the King. Emma and her husband were not forgotten either. Their three names had become inseparably linked together. Marie-Caroline presented Emma with a gold chain and her portrait set in diamonds, bearing this inscription: "Eternal Gratitude." The presents which Hamilton and his wife received, represented a value of sixty thousand guineas. Captains Foote, Troubridge, Hardy, and other officers, were presented with snuff-boxes, watches, rings and other objects.‡

In the meantime, the work of repression was being carried on unmercifully in Naples. The number of executions that took place has already been quoted. Was there no hand to arrest the relentless course of revenge? Lady Hamilton was then all-powerful; she could have made use of her influence to mitigate the anguish of the doomed patriots. Von Helfert, who attributes every virtue to his hero and heroine, states that she intervened in favour of several victims, amongst others the Duchess of San Marco and Duchess of Sorrentino. For instance the Queen wrote to her: "I shall see that justice is done to this interesting Duchess of Sorrentino, and that her

* *Dispatches*, vol. iii, pp. 409-10.

† *Dispatches*, vol. iii, p. 410.

‡ *Fabrizio Ruffo*, by von Helfert.

cruel lot is alleviated. . . Alas! the sole privilege and satisfaction which I possess is relieving the sorrows of others."* These moments of passing pity must be remembered to the credit of Marie-Caroline and her friend.

It would seem that, occasionally, they were both capable of feeling. No disposition is made up entirely of vice or virtue. Every individual has more or less of these compounds, accordng to his temperament, his principles, his interest, or his circumstances. Some poet has said:

. . . notre nature
A de mal et de bien pétri sa créature.

These two women were endowed with more evil in their dispositions than good, and it is to be feared that political motives were of great weight in prompting these deeds of mercy. This remark does not, however, contradict the statement already made in their favour. Neither Marie-Caroline or Emma were bad throughout. Wounded pride on the one side, excessive complaisance on the other, led them to commit the most odious actions. But when their interests were not at stake, the womanly disposition reasserted itself, and they could be kind and generous. The Queen seems even to have felt a tardy regret at having let loose the fury of revenge on Naples. On September 10, 1799, she wrote to Gallo: "I suffer mortal torments at the violence and severe measures employed in Naples. The number of the guilty is so great, that all cannot be according to justice. My heart bleeds for them."† And again: "Like all cowards and poltroons, we believe cruelty gives assurance."‡ As for Emma, her indifference made her follow the lead of her friend passively, whether for good or for evil. Whilst

* Palumbo, lxxxviii, p. 213.

† *Correspondance avec le Marquis de Gallo*, No. 339.

‡ *Correspondance avec le Marquis de Gallo*, No. 334. It will be remembered that on May 17, of the same year, the Queen had written to Gallo saying: "A general massacre would not cause me the slightest pain."

she was on board the *Foudroyant*, Marie-Caroline sent to her money to be distributed amongst the needy, "trusting to her to dispose of it."*

At the Court of Naples, Emma's name was constantly associated with that of her lover. Hamilton also shared the glory of the victor. As for the Queen, she did not object to this state of affairs. In the first place, she had scarcely a right to preach on the subject of morals, and besides, in those days, such arrangements were very frequent in Neapolitan society, and the husband, the wife and the lover, *il ganzo*, lived in perfect harmony. So the three English people had merely adopted a custom in vogue in many a Neapolitan home.

In August, the hero and his two bosom friends arrived in Palermo. In the midst of the extraordinary events that were taking place, the Neapolitan sovereigns decided to give a great fête in honour of Nelson. They wished to celebrate September 3, the anniversary of the day on which news of the victory of the Nile had reached Naples, at the same time expressing their gratitude for the services which he had rendered to Naples. Count Roger de Damas writes: "The Queen was too good-hearted to put bounds to her gratitude. She flattered the vanity of Nelson and his mistress, and gave a splendid entertainment." A desire to fawn upon Britain, had quite as much to do with these festivities, as any wish to show gratitude to Nelson. The rejoicings were rendered ridiculous by the part played by Hamilton and his wife. "A temple of Fame was erected, which contained wax figures, one representing Lady Hamilton in the character of 'Victory,' holding in outstretched hand a wreath of laurel for the decoration of the waxen effigy of the British Admiral, who was being presented to her by her husband, likewise in model. Nelson, Sir William and Lady Hamilton were received by their Sicilian Majesties on the steps of this temple, and were affectionately embraced by them. The King took the laurel wreath, set with diamonds, from the hand of

* Palumbo, lxxxiii, p. 207; lxxxvii, p. 213.

Victory, and placed it on the head of the veritable Nelson, also decorating Sir William and Lady Hamilton in a similar manner. They wore their leafy coronets during the whole of the entertainment, and anything more foolish than they must have appeared can hardly be presented to the imagination. A plain little man with one arm and one eye, an old man verging on seventy, and a woman rapidly approaching *embonpoint*, walking about in public company so crowned, and smiling in self-consciousness."*

And the idle crowd rent the air with cries of *Viva Nelson*! *Viva Miledi*! *Viva Hamilton*!† On that day Emma enjoyed the intoxicating raptures of success. But the happy, selfish woman did not guess that the crowd cheered without knowing why, simply because of orders received from the Queen and her courtiers. The salute of the guns, the uproar, the music, sufficed to delight the people, and dispose them to cheering whomsoever was proposed to them. They knew nothing about the trio. Southern nations love noisy and theatrical manifestations and gorgeous scenery, just as they love bright, glaring colours, and all that harmonises with their glorious sun, and the brilliant colouring of their land. Such demonstrative ways seem exaggerated to the more reserved inhabitants of the grey northern regions.

By imposing more and more on the Queen and Nelson, Lady Hamilton became conscious that she was all-powerful with them, and she revelled in this delicious sensation of her glory. All the instincts of the actress were satisfied. Her head was completely turned with the royal favour and the cheers of the crowd. And this prevented her

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, ch. xiv, p. 116. Count Roger de Damas' account appears to be more reliable. According to his version, Prince Leopold, and not the King, crowned Nelson's statue and the hero himself. M. de Damas adds that : "no officer of the fleet would consent to go to the fête. When Nelson left the temple, he may have felt prouder, but he was less glorious than when he entered it." *Mémoires du Comte Roger de Damas.* G. F. Rambaud.

† *Nelsonian Reminiscences*, by Lieutenant Parsons, pp. 16-26.

from noticing that, like one of Tasso's knights, who succumbed to the love philtre of an enchantress, her beloved had become ridiculous and she also. Roger de Damas says: "Nelson was nothing but a caricature of Rinaldo, slave of a silly, shameless Armida, destitute of all magic charms. The officers of the fleet were humiliated and disgusted at the sight."

Radiant with success, blazing with diamonds, surrounded with luxury, Lady Hamilton bewitched Nelson and held him spellbound on the enchanted coast of Palermo. Thinking more of his happy love and his vanity than his glory, he remained inactive in Sicily. Accompanied by Lady Hamilton, he made many excursions to Cape Zaffarano in a graceful boat rowed by twelve oarsmen, clothed in white, wearing black velvet caps embroidered with a silver leopard. Sometimes, from the same craft, they watched the King shooting sea-gulls and sea-mews along the coast. One evening, after supper on board the *Foudroyant*, Nelson and Emma stepped into the barge, and cruised about for two hours in sight of the city that was splendidly illuminated. And daily, in Naples, the scaffold ran with blood.

The King and Queen had begged Nelson to remain at Palermo and protect them with his fleet; but no doubt Emma's wiles were of much more weight than the entreaties of the royal pair. He was once more severely reprimanded by the Admiralty. He let the storm blow over, obeying his mistress instead of his chiefs. And, whilst Nelson was lulled to sleep in fair Palermo, his island of Capua, General Buonaparte stole across the Mediterranean without meeting one British vessel. Count Roger de Damas, who was at Palermo at the time, says: "To this moral torpor we owe Buonaparte's career. There is no doubt that but for this lethargy, Nelson's watchfulness and natural activity would have intercepted the frigate bearing Cæsar and his fortunes from Egypt into France. Buonaparte should raise an altar to Lady Hamilton; he must count her

first amongst all the lucky chances that led him to the throne. This is strange, but it is absolutely true."

Whilst the fleet was moored within sight of Palermo, and Buonaparte had landed peacefully at Fréjus, General Junot left Egypt in accordance with the instructions given to Kléber. He set sail in a merchant vessel, which was captured by the *Theseus* belonging to the British fleet. He was first taken to Jaffa, and then conveyed to Palermo on board the *Vaillant*. On this occasion Nelson set aside his hatred of the French, and on the day after Junot's arrival, following the graceful custom of the Italians, he welcomed the French general by sending him courteously a basket full of fruit, and some bottles of syrup and Bordeaux. Lady Hamilton, vying with her lover in graciousness, added oranges to the present.

It was about this time that Lady Hamilton received an extraordinary distinction which greatly flattered her. The Emperor of Russia, who had constituted himself Grand Master of the scattered Order of the Maltese Knights, had just bestowed the Grand Cross on Nelson. The Admiral asked that the same reward should be given to his mistress. His request was granted. Formerly this order was granted only to men who could boast of high lineage and had made a vow of chastity. Emma scarcely fulfilled these two conditions. She considered that she had these and other claims to the honour conferred on her. Thus, on February 25, 1800, she wrote to Charles Greville; "I have rendered some service to the poor Maltese. I got them ten thousand pounds and sent coin when they were in distress. The deputies have been lodged in my house. . . I am the first English woman that ever had it. Sir W. is pleased, so *I am happy*."*

Later, in her Memorial to the Prince Regent, she stated that the insignia of the Order had been bestowed on her with the usual ceremony by Sir Alexander Ball.

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, p. 271.

But for the fact that Paul I of Russia was a crowned lunatic, one might be inclined to wonder why this honour was conferred on Emma rather than on her husband. After all, the money and coin which Emma distributed to the Maltese had been provided out of her husband's purse, and perhaps from Marie-Caroline's largesse, for at the beginning of the year 1800 the Queen had entrusted her with a sum for the needy. The house that had given shelter to the Maltese deputies was the British Embassy. But Paul trusted Nelson, or perhaps he too, like so many others, had felt the fatal charm whereby the former nurse-maid could captivate, even at a distance. As for Hamilton, he shared the fate that awaits the husband of a great coquette. He simply disappeared, swallowed up, blotted out by the radiance that surrounded his wife. In her sphere Emma was as victorious as Nelson himself; she had more influence than he, she enjoyed greater triumphs. Surely, the husband could not quarrel with a man such as Nelson! Some of the glory that radiated from the hero must certainly be reflected in the friend. Hamilton had beguiled himself by all sorts of sophisms in order to be convinced that he was right in marrying his nephew's mistress. He was therefore quite justified in finding fresh ones to reconcile him with the fact that he must now share his wife with Nelson. It is also possible that he deliberately closed his eyes on a situation that secured him the repose which suited his ripening age!

"Un partage avec Jupiter
N'a rien du tout qui déshonore."

In order to have a peaceful home, some men are willing to make any concessions. Besides, it is just possible that Hamilton had not noticed anything, and did not suspect his wife and friend.

M. Fauchier Magnan constantly defends Emma up to this period of her life, when he is obliged to admit that the former *fille entretenue* gives herself airs that make

her absolutely ridiculous. And he is right. On July 19 she actually wrote to Greville: "The Queen is not yet come. She sent me as her Deputy; for I am very popular. . . Having the head of the Lazeronys an old friend, he came in the night of our arrival, and told me that he had 90 thousand Lazeronis ready, at the holding up of his finger, but only twenty . . . with arms . . . I have thro him made 'the Queen's party,' and the people at large have pray'd for her to come back, and she is now very popular"* Emma was fond of boasting; on this occasion, however, she may not have been exaggerating. Her husband, who was not given to praising himself, and is, moreover, a valuable witness for the historian, corroborates his wife's statement in a letter to Charles Greville: "Probably some ships will soon be sent home from Palermo, and Emma and I shall profit of one. Every capt. wishes to serve us, and no one are, I believe, more popular in the navy at this moment than Emma and I."†

By humouring the passions of a race it is easy to make friends with them, more especially if these passions are bad. In the preceding year, Lady Hamilton had stirred up the population against the French. In this way she had curried favour with the Neapolitan rabble, and, as she said, the war and the Revolution had affected her as much as it had the people of Naples. Her furniture had been destroyed, her house bombarded. "I saw at a distance our despoiled house in town . . . Sir William's new apartment—a bomb burst in it!" she wrote to Greville.‡

* Morrison MSS., No. 411.

† Morrison, *Nelson Papers*, ii, p. 53.

‡ That Lady Hamilton exaggerated the importance of the losses she had suffered, is proved by a somewhat curious document which appears to have escaped the notice of all her biographers. This document, a proclamation of the Military Committee (Naval section) of the Parthenopean Republic is dated 16th Germinal (April 7, 1799) and runs thus: "Brave Neapolitans! Hear the plans of our enemies. Yesterday under

With her usual heedlessness, she made the most of the opportunity, and begged her former lover to give her some assistance. "It would be a charity to send me some things; for in saving all for my royal and dear friend, I lost my little all. Never mind."*

When the Grand Cross of Malta was placed on her chaste bosom, Emma had received her last favour from Fortune.

The British Government was guided by other rules than those of Paul of Russia. They had never

pretext of seeking information as to the belongings which the ex-minister William Hamilton had left behind him, an officer, John Inelchi and a Lieutenant from the *Culloden* presented themselves at Castell Uovo. Everybody knows that he left nothing belonging to him, and the English are aware of this fact. However, their request was granted and, being conducted to the Minister's house, they were allowed to inspect the place themselves. This request was prompted by a wish to reconnoitre our battery along the coast, etc."

Therefore, had Lady Hamilton left any valuable furniture in her house, she would have been able to recover it on this occasion.

This document bears only one signature, but a very significant one, that of Caracciolo. No doubt in his last extremity, the unfortunate Admiral wished to remind her of this service which he had rendered her. But the all-powerful Emma "did not allow herself to be found." A further proof is to be found in another paper dated : April 12, 1799. "Un parlamentario inglese e andato a Napoli ed a finito di levare della casa de Hamilton quanto ancora ci si trovava, ed i vini che a trovati bevuti gli ha fatti pagare." (*Carteggio della regina Maria Carolina col Cardinale Fabrizio Ruffo*, published by Benedetto Maresca in the review *Archivio storico per le province Napoletane*, 1880.)

One more detail. A short time ago, the present owner of Palazzo Sessa discovered in a cellar various works of art, dating from the residence of Hamilton and his wife. Amongst these is a portrait believed to be that of Mrs Cadogan. It is supposed that when the Ambassador and his household prepared for flight, at the end of December 1798, these objects were hurriedly concealed in the cellar, and probably forgotten, as Hamilton was recalled to London before they really settled down again in Naples. So they imagined that they had suffered greater loss than was really the case. These objects are still in possession of the owner of the Palazzo. They might be claimed by the heirs of Hamilton, Greville or Horatia.

* Morrison MSS., 411.

approved of the Ambassador's wife, and the Queen of England had refused to receive her at Court. His marriage had been sanctioned in consideration of his long and trusty services, and because an elderly widower cannot have rules imposed on him as though he were a young man. At this stage, however, the impression was that there had been enough scandal. Lady Hamilton was no longer content with making a show of herself; she had now chained the hero to her chariot wheels. She disposed of Nelson's fleet; she gave him orders. In the House of Commons, Fox had inveighed against the atrocities of the Counter-Revolution in Naples.* Nelson was publicly indicted for his guilty complaisance. The cause of his weakness was well known, but the Government hesitated before arraigning the conqueror of the Nile. His constant disregard of orders deserved punishment, but when the occasion presented itself, they dared not recall him. Hamilton had rashly petitioned for leave of absence to look after his interests in England, adding that it was absolutely necessary for him to undertake this journey and that, in case of a refusal, he would be obliged to resign his post. The home authorities did

* "When the right honourable gentleman speaks of the extraordinary successes of the last campaign, he does not mention the horrors by which some of these successes were accomplished. Naples, for instance, has been among others what is called delivered, and yet, if I am rightly informed, it has been stained and polluted by murders so ferocious, and by cruelties of every kind so abhorrent, that the heart shudders at the recital. Nay, England is not totally exempt from reproach, if the rumours that are circulated be true. It is said, that a party of the Republican inhabitants of Naples took shelter in the fortress of the Castel del Uovo. They were besieged by a detachment from the royal army, to whom they refused to surrender; but demanded that a British officer should be brought forward, and to him they capitulated. They made terms with him under the sanction of the British name. It was agreed that their persons and property should be safe, and that they should be conveyed to Toulon. They were accordingly put on board a vessel; but before they sailed their property was confiscated, numbers of them taken out, thrown into dungeons, and some of them, I understand, notwithstanding the British guarantee, actually executed." (Fox, *Speeches*, vol. vi, page 419.)

not miss this chance, and promptly replied that his resignation had been accepted. They were perfectly justified in concluding that Nelson was sure to follow in the wake of his friends.

Although Palumbo is very hostile to the Hamiltons and Nelson, he attributes Hamilton's disgrace to a very honourable cause, stating that the Ambassador insisted that the Island of Malta should be given back to the King of Naples.* Nelson and Hamilton had always promised that it should be handed over to Ferdinand, but the Government deemed such a promise contrary to the interest of the nation.

Ferdinand, however, was convinced that Hamilton, or at least his wife, was playing a double game, trying to convince him that he would recover Malta whereas they both knew full well, England would not consent to this restitution. Consequently, when at the Queen's instigation Emma besought the King to ask the Foreign Office to maintain Hamilton in his post, a very violent scene took place between the two. Emma probably used some imprudent words, and although men generally show great consideration to women who deserve none, the King gave way to a paroxysm of fury. All that is known about this scene is to be gathered from the following note written by the Queen to her friend: "Yesterday, after you left I witnessed an awful scene. He (the King) screamed like a madman, yelling with fury, declaring that he would kill you, throw you out of the window. He wanted to call your husband and complain to him, that you had become a turn-coat (*tornare le spalle*)."†

It was a terrible blow to Emma. She felt that Hamilton was too old ever to obtain another post, and that, consequently, she would have to withdraw from the stage where she had so long acted a brilliant part. Instead of acknowledging that she was to some extent responsible

* *Carteggio*, by Palumbo, Prefazione xiii.

† According to Mr W. Sichel, this scene was occasioned by Emma interceding for the Duchess of Sorrentino, *op. cit.* p. 321.

for her husband's disgrace, she burst into invectives against her old enemies the infamous Jacobins. In the excess of her rage, she may really have come to believe that all she thought was true; that she never had any lovers, that her marriage had really been the union of a public man with an honest young girl, and that Nelson and she knew no other passion save the pure flame of patriotism. Such injustice was enough to make her sick of virtue! She must protest. Which loyal friend could she entrust with the mission of defending her honour? She could only choose amongst her former lovers, and, of these, Charles Greville was best suited to the task. As she was very proud of being associated with the great name of Nelson, she had already boasted to Greville of this connection. It was a matter of no importance. Emma had a conveniently short memory, controlled, moreover, by a very lively imagination. So she forgot that of all the men in the world, Greville was the one who knew best the price to be set on Lady Hamilton's honour, and that, should he consent to be her champion, no one would believe such a witness. She had such a good opinion of herself that she easily cast aside all thoughts that annoyed her, and forgot her treachery, foolishness, secret intrigues, and public crimes, until she thought herself white as snow. In the words of Rousseau, she wanted to enjoy the pleasures of vice and the honours of virtue. In this state of mind, she wrote the following extraordinary letter to Greville on February 25:

. . . We are more united and comfortable than ever in spite of the infamous Jacobin papers, jealous of Lord Nelson's glory and Sir William's and mine. But we do not mind them. Lord N. is a truly virtuous and great man; and because we have been fagging, and ruining our health, and sacrificing every comfort, in the cause of loyalty, our private characters are to be stabbed in the dark. First, it was said, that Sir W. and Lord N. fought; then that we played and lost. First Sir W. and Lord N. live

like brothers; next Lord N. never plays; and this I give you my word of honour. So I beg you will contradict any of these vile reports. Not that Sir W. and Lord N. mind it; and I get scolded by the Queen, and all of them, for having suffered one day's uneasiness.

We are coming home; and I am miserable to leave my dearest friend the Q . . . She cannot be consoled . . .*

It is possible to be versed in the art of trickery, and have great experience, without losing all one's simplicity. This arises from a weak or undisciplined mind, a want of moral education and tact, or an absence of ideals What is to be thought of the strange assertion, "we are more united and comfortable than ever" and "Sir W. and Lord Nelson live like brothers"? She was not the first woman who, after having been the mistress of a man, had succeeded in becoming his wife; and, deceiving the trust he placed in her, betrayed him by causing a close friendship to spring up between him and her lover. It is impossible not to smile at the suggestion of a duel between a sexagenarian and a man with one arm. Two other amusing statements are: "Lord Nelson never plays," and "I give you my word of honour." Surely, a most entertaining remark on the part of a woman who, if she had any notion of what the word meant, had certainly played hard and fast with it throughout her life. Here again she was calling on her honour in support of a lie. One might be tempted to believe that Nelson never gambled because, as he had only one arm, it would be very difficult for him to hold his cards, or shuffle and deal. On the contrary, however, the Admiral was a great gambler. He lost fabulous sums at Palermo. His friend, Captain Troubridge was greatly upset and thought it his duty to remonstrate. In a letter written on February 27, 1799, he begged Nelson to forgive a blunt sailor and sincere friend for expressing his surprise that he should care to spend all his nights gambling. Several times these

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, p. 270.

L. Guzzardi pinxt. *J. Skelton sculpt*

HORATIO, VISCOUNT NELSON

reproaches occur in his letters to Nelson. "These remonstrances," says the Queen's biographer, "had no effect. The Admiral's salary, his prize money, his savings and the presents given in honour of Aboukir, were all swallowed up. Lady Hamilton, who was well aware of her lover's ruin, imagined a palliative which seemed quite natural to her. Two Spanish vessels laden with a valuable cargo of mercury were moored in the harbour of Palermo. She advised Nelson to put an embargo on this rich plunder. Her method of attack had been too sudden, Nelson had not realised that he had fallen so low. He left the room without a word. The adventuress had many reasons for wishing to gain her point, so she only laughed at her lover's scruples, and turned to the King. Here again, she met with a rebuff, for the 'stupid' Ferdinand also entertained scruples, and replied curtly that she was forgetting herself, that he believed he had still sufficient authority to protect the property of a neutral nation, and adding that he was quite willing to reward brave Nelson, but not by stealing from his neighbour."*

When Emma left Naples she enjoyed one supreme consolation. As the Admiralty had foreseen, Nelson followed and accompanied her on the homeward journey.†

In order to enjoy her friend's company a little longer,

* *La reine Marie-Caroline de Naples*, by A. Gagnière, p. 137.

† Mr Von Helfert states that Nelson was recalled: "About this time, the two good friends and faithful upholders of the Neapolitan sovereigns were called away. Horatio Nelson was ordered to leave the Mediterranean, and join the fleet in the Northern Seas, whilst Hamilton was recalled." (*Königin Karolina.*)

In his Prefazione of the Carteggio, Palumbo says the Admiral gave up his command of his own free will, in order to follow Emma. M. Fauchier Magnan thinks that he had been reprimanded because of his insubordination, his inaction at Naples and his passion for Lady Hamilton. According to the Queen, he left of his own free will: "To my great regret, he wants to go to England. Keith, who is in command over him, the departure of the Hamiltons and the annoyances caused by Acton, all these things have made him take an irrevocable decision." *Correspondance avec Gallo*, p. 343.

the Queen suddenly felt an irresistible longing to visit her daughter, the Empress, in Vienna. The fact that she was so unpopular in Naples may also have had something to do with her decision So they started for Austria, taking a circuitous route, for war raged everywhere. Germany was overrun with troops, and Buonaparte's army was taking a revenge in Italy. M. Fauchier Magnan calls this a "fatal" journey, because it finally brought discredit on the quartette, and more especially, on the strange alliance of husband, wife and lover. "She drags Nelson about just like a bear-leader showing off his bear," was said of Emma. M. Fauchier Magnan further describes a dinner party during which the celebrated lovers indulged rather too freely in good wines,* whilst Sir William to prove his nimbleness "hopped" on "his backbone."†

As Emma had left Court life, she became once more the vulgar woman, to whom Hamilton and Marie-Caroline had with difficulty given a certain polish. She used coarse language, and displayed an almost incredible lack of manners. Loose talk, bold and filthy expressions, flowed from her exquisite lips like unclean insects emerging from a lovely flower.‡

* *Remains of Mrs Trench*, p. 110, October 9, 1800 ; "A great breakfast at the Elliots' given to the Nelson party . . . Lady Hamilton, who declared she was passionately fond of champagne, took such a portion of it as astonished me . . . Poor Mr Elliot, who was anxious the party should not expose themselves more than they had done already, endeavoured to stop the effusion of champagne, and effected it with some difficulty."

† Physical energy and feats of strength were then the fashion, as well as gourmandising: In Paris, General Junot had a dynamometre by which each guest was requested to test his strength. Regnault (de St Jean d'Angely) a Councillor of State could carry a lady all the way round his dining-room, holding her with his left hand, whilst her two feet rested on his right hand. General Murat tried his strength with a simple Major ; resting his elbows on the table, their fingers entwined, they tried to force down each others hands.

‡ Elliot accompanied Lady Hamilton as far as Hamburg, and amused himself with noting down the language she used, the vulgarity of which was only equalled by the sentiments they expressed. He wrote to Mrs

She had quite forgotten her husband's fall from favour, and the false position it entailed for her. It was a sad sight to see this man, who had some merits, being dragged through Europe by his wife together with her lover, the married man who was tied to her skirts, whilst she took a childish pleasure in twisting them both round her little finger.

The party was numerous and included many distinguished travellers. The Queen was accompanied by three daughters, one of whom, Princess Marie-Amélie, was to be Queen of the French; Prince Leopold and Prince Castelcicala. As usual, Emma was escorted by her mother, good old Mrs Cadogan, and her secretary Miss Knight. Her heart, her senses, and her vanity, found entire satisfaction on this journey during which she was surrounded by her husband, her lover, and the Queen.

Whilst travelling, she discovered a new talent, and tried her hand as an orator. As they passed through Leghorn, news of the battle of Marengo reached the city. The mob invaded the arsenals and carried off weapons. Then, knowing that Nelson had arrived, they marched on the palace and asked to be led against the French. The Queen was terrified, and quite at a loss how to act. Lady Hamilton stepped out on to the balcony, and falling into the attitude of an antique statue, harangued the crowd. She commanded, they obeyed. Their angry passions were lulled, and silently they carried their arms back to the arsenals.

It was perhaps in recognition of this service that, before leaving Leghorn, Queen Caroline bestowed on her a diamond necklace, with the ciphers of the royal children intertwined with locks of hair. She also wanted to grant

Elliot; "Lady Hamilton's maid began to scold in French about some provisions which had been forgot, in language quite impossible to repeat, using certain French words which were never spoken but by *men* of the lowest classes . . . Lady Hamilton began bawling for an Irish stew, and her old mother set about washing the potatoes which she did as cleverly as possible." *Remains of Mrs Trench*, p. 111.

her a yearly pension of £1,000, but this Hamilton declined, saying that the British Government would indemnify them for the losses which they had sustained whilst in office abroad.

They started once more on their journey and arrived at Ancona where they went on board a Russian frigate that brought them to Trieste. By slow stages Vienna was reached at length. In the Austrian capital they went through a round of festivities.

Nelson and the Hamiltons stayed with the Esterhazys in their castle at Saint Weit. One of the guests, Lord Fitzharris, not over pleased at Emma making such an exhibition of Nelson, thus relates his impressions of their visit: "We never sat down to supper or dinner less than sixty or seventy persons. . . Lady Hamilton is, without exception, the most coarse, ill-mannered, disagreeable woman we ever met." The Princess had got a number of musicians, and the famous Haydn, who was in their service, to play, knowing Lady Hamilton was fond of music. Instead of attending to them, however, she sat down to the faro table, held Nelson's cards for him and won between £300 and £400, but did not listen to a note of Haydn's music.

At Schoenbrunn Emma bade farewell to the Queen who had fostered her fortunes. Then the trio continued their journey and reached Saxony. It has been already stated that the wife of the Elector did not treat her beautiful guest with the consideration to which Marie-Caroline had accustomed her.

Receptions were often held at the Court of Saxony, and the Electress was noted as a most gracious hostess. Naturally Emma was eager to be received at Court. Mrs Elliott, wife of the British Minister, knowing that the Elector's wife was determined not to notice Lady Hamilton, did her best to dissuade her from going there, assuring her these receptions at the little Court of Saxony were horribly dull, and quite beneath the notice of one who had witnessed the *recevimenti* of the Queen of

Naples. She went on to say that the guests were all stiff and solemn, hampered by rules of etiquette. There were no supper parties, no dinner parties. Whereupon Emma is said to have exclaimed: "What! No guttling."

It must be remembered that during this journey Emma neglected her manners, and often made use of the vocabulary that had been familiar to her when she was a tavern servant. Moreover, she had become very fond of good cheer. When she found that she was ostracized by the Electress, she gave vent to her feelings in a few coarse words, and then indulged in interminable meals. Although none of her defenders have ever set her up as a moralist, she was not altogether unprincipled. Thus she laid down as a maxim that "good food constitutes the whole happiness of human nature."* Accordingly, she ate well, and drank well. Although she did not indulge in the same excesses as the Duchesse de Berry, daughter of the Regent, she might very well have competed with her. Her splendid appetite made her thrive more than she wished, for the sculptural outline of her figure was fast losing its graceful elegance.

Mrs Saint George, better known as Mrs Trench, an English lady living at the time in Dresden, kept a diary which has been published under the title of *Journal of Mrs Saint George Trench*. She met Lady Hamilton during her stay in the Saxon capital, and describes her real personality without enthusiasm or prejudice. Her views coincide entirely with those of Lord Fitzharris. Hamilton's wife was no longer the slender and graceful girl who had arrived in Naples fourteen years before.

"She is bold, forward, coarse, assuming, and vain. Her figure is colossal, but, excepting her feet, which are hideous, well shaped. Her bones are large, and she is exceedingly *embonpoint*. She resembles the bust of Ariadne;

* When the Marquise du Deffand maintained that "supper is one of the four ends of man," she was not expressing a low material idea, such as Lady Hamilton had in view. According to the Marquise, people go to meals, not so much to eat, as to enjoy a clever conversation, a dainty which Lady Hamilton was not capable of appreciating.

the shape of all her features is fine, as is the form of her head, and particularly her ears; her teeth are a little irregular, but tolerably white, her eyes light blue, with a brown spot in one, which, though a defect, takes nothing away from her beauty and expression. Her eyebrows and hair are dark, and her complexion coarse. Her expression is strongly marked, variable, and interesting; her movements in common life ungraceful; her voice loud, yet not disagreeable . . . Mrs Cadogan, Lady Hamilton's mother, is what one might expect."*

It would have been strange had Lady Hamilton failed to give her Attitudes in Dresden.† These famous Attitudes were a peculiar talent which, in Emma's eyes, raised her above all women. They conferred on her a character, and for lack of a better one—a sort of dignity. Emma also let the Saxons hear her voice. *Nina* no longer appealed to her. She now sang hymns in honour of Nelson, and particularly an ode written by Miss Knight to celebrate the Battle of the Nile, and which Hadyn had set to music while they were in Vienna.

" She puffs the incense full in his face; but he receives it with pleasure, and snuffs it up very cordially. The songs all ended in the sailors' way, with Hip, hip, hip, hurra; and a bumper with the last drop on the nail, a ceremony I had never heard of or seen before."‡

If Emma treated Nelson as a god, he looked on her as a divinity. Lady Minto, whose husband was Ambassador at Vienna, wrote to her sister Lady Malmesbury: " I don't think Nelson altered in the least, he has the same shock head of hair, and the same honest, simple manners, but he is devoted to Emma. He thinks her quite an *angel*, and talks of her as such to her face and behind her back, and she leads him about like a keeper with a bear. She must sit by him at dinner to cut his meat, and he carries her handkerchief."§

* *Journal of Mrs Trench*, pp. 75-76.

† See Mrs Trench's description of the Attitudes, appendix, p. 328.

‡ *Journal of Mrs Trench*, p. 76. § Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

At length Hamburg was reached and they embarked for England. Emma had always been eager to meet celebrated men, or at least to show herself to them. During her sojourn in Hamburg, she saw Klopstock, and appears to have impressed the aged poet, just as in earlier days, she had charmed young Goethe. She never overlooked an occasion for reaping success, so she did not fail to show herself in her wonderful Attitudes, which, no less than her personality, enraptured Hamburg.*

The generosity displayed on all occasions by Nelson and Lady Hamilton deserves great praise. Here again, before leaving Hamburg, they gave assistance to all who appealed to them. Amongst these was Dumouriez, for whom the Admiral professed the greatest admiration, and who felt the beneficial effects of his munificence.

* See the interesting work with which Lady Hamilton inspired the well-known author, Mayer. *Skizzen zu einem Gemalde aus.* Hamburg, 1801-1803. Published by F. H. Nestler.

CHAPTER XIII

Nelson's return to England—His wife leaves him—Nelson with the Hamiltons—The birth of Horatia—She is entrusted to Mrs Gibson—Mrs Gamlin's Account of Horatia—James Gillray's Caricature—Nelson's fatherly tenderness—Horatia with Lady Hamilton—Horatia's attempt to discover her mother—William Haslewood's reply—Nelson's ambiguous letters—Their probable motive—*The Thomson Letters.*

INFATUATION will carry people to the strangest excesses! When it was known that Lady Hamilton was soon to land in England, the inhabitants of Norwich started a subscription and presented the Ambassador's wife with a magnificent ring, a topaz set with fourteen diamonds and engraved with this inscription: "Offered to Emma, Lady Hamilton by the inhabitants of Norwich, November 6, 1800." Thus virtue is ever rewarded. The unknown person to whom the initiative of this affair belongs, must have been prompted by interested motives, or else have known very little about the woman to whom the offering was made.

The trio reached London. Thousands of enthusiastic people went out to welcome Nelson. But his wife was not there. His father and Lady Nelson were to attend the grand banquet given at the Mansion House. They did not appear, and the hero arrived escorted by Hamilton and Emma. Lady Nelson had no wish to sit at the same table with her husband's mistress, nor did she feel any inclination to offer her the present of a ring. So she remained at home in dignified reserve.

Nelson's marriage with the widow of Dr Nisbet had been a love match. Like most passions, it was an ephemeral one. Had Nelson not died at Trafalgar, it is prob-

able that his love for Emma would have had the same fate. When this passion burst forth and became the talk of Europe, and to such a degree that the British Government saw fit to recall both Nelson and Hamilton, it was not possible for the wife to ignore her husband's infatuation. The news did not reach her ears through common report only; Josiah Nisbet, Nelson's stepson, had also informed her of what was going on.

This young man was deeply attached to Nelson and had saved his life at Teneriffe. On this occasion, Nelson had written to his wife: "I know that it will add much to your pleasure in finding that Josiah, under God's Providence, was principally instrumental in saving my life."* But, although he really loved his stepfather, Josiah was more deeply attached to his mother and felt it his duty to tell her the whole truth.†

Besides, Nelson's association with Emma was notorious and known all over Europe. As early as 1798, it was the talk of Gibraltar. The officers of the fleet lost no time in spreading the news on their return to England.

An inconsiderate step on the part of Emma finally confirmed Lady Nelson's suspicions. Emma's head had been so effectually turned by the renown of her Attitudes and her connection with Queen Marie-Caroline and the conqueror of the Nile, that she quite forgot the few rules of good-breeding that Hamilton had endeavoured to teach her. From Italy she had dared to send Lady Nelson an account of the festivities in honour of her husband. She now made a proffer of her services; Lady Nelson naturally abstained from responding to these uncalled for civilities, and thereby much surprised the ignorant Lady Hamilton.

For two years, Lady Nelson had lived in doubt and sorrow. When at length her husband was free to return to her, he undertook a long journey through Europe in

* *Dispatches*, vol. ii, p. 436,

† When Eugène Beauharnais' stepfather, General Buonaparte, started an intrigue with Pauline Fourès in Egypt, the young man made no revelations to his mother. True, at the same time, Josephine was equally taken up with M. Hippolyte Charles, at Malmaison.

company with the woman who had stolen his heart. This did not look as though he were very anxious to meet his wife. Lady Nelson was tortured in her most delicate feelings. They had ceased to correspond, for Nelson had bidden his friend Davison announce his return to Lady Nelson. He did not dare to send her a loving message; he could not say he longed to see his blameless wife, but still he was anxious to know what kind of reception he was likely to meet with.

Nelson denied that there had been any misconduct and, in such cases it is difficult to bring forward material proofs. Many historians, and first amongst these Mrs Gamlin, refuse to believe Nelson guilty. But Lady Nelson was convinced. On his return to London the Admiral had no choice but to reside in his own house, and face his offended wife. Their meeting must have been rather unpleasant. Lady Nelson went straight to the point and questioned him concerning Emma. He admitted that he felt great friendship for her, but declared his feelings were of a platonic nature. It was not easy to convince the wife, but for the present she decided to avoid an exposure. Some mysterious instinct, half jealousy half curiosity, which often reveals itself in the feminine disposition, prompted her to consent to receive her rival. Long experience and her natural taste had made Emma a perfect comedian. She put on the gravest expression she could command, assumed a most dignified demeanour and thus armed, faced the encounter. Like all women of her kind, she possessed an inexhaustible fund of assurance, nevertheless, even for her, it was a difficult ordeal to face Lady Nelson. But such women dare anything except in a good cause. It is impossible to say how Lady Nelson was affected by her rival's visit; but the two women certainly met more than once.*

* To convince the public that they were reconciled Lady Nelson and her rival went to the theatre together. "I afterwards heard that Lady Nelson fainted in the box," says Miss Knight in her autobiography. No doubt Lady Nelson could not face the ordeal of feeling all eyes turned on her party.

In the simplicity of his love, Nelson conceived a no less ingenuous plan of life, and imagined for a time that *la femme et l'amie* as Victor Hugo puts it, might live peaceably side by side.

Such an arrangement was incompatible with Lady Nelson's dignity. For the sake of appearances, she tried hard to control her feelings and accept the painful position in which she was placed. The effort was beyond her powers of endurance, and a very trivial incident sufficed to bring about a rupture. This scene is related by an eye witness. On April 13, 1846, William Haslewood wrote to Sir Harris Nicolas: "I happened to be present when the unhappy rupture took place . . . In the winter of 1800-1801, I was breakfasting with Lord and Lady Nelson at their lodgings in Arlington Street, and a cheerful conversation was passing on indifferent subjects, when Lord Nelson spoke of something which had been done or said by 'dear Lady Hamilton'; upon which Lady Nelson rose from her chair, and exclaimed with much vehemence, 'I am sick of hearing of dear Lady Hamilton, and am resolved that you shall give up either her or me.' Lord Nelson with perfect calmness said, 'Take care, Fanny, what you say; I love you sincerely, but I cannot forget my obligations to Lady Hamilton, or speak of her otherwise than with affection and admiration.' Without one soothing word or gesture, Lady Nelson left the room, and shortly after drove from the house. They never lived together afterwards."*

Nelson might say with truth that he still felt sincere affection towards his wife. His passion for Lady Hamilton had not robbed him of his friends. Why should his wife not remain on good terms with him. He could not but have the greatest regard for her, but women who have once been loved cannot easily reconcile themselves to the loss of their rights and, in truth, the position is an intolerable one, especially when the law is on their side. Lady Nelson behaved with perfect dignity. Her retreat was

* *Dispatches*, vol. vii, p. 392.

an honourable one, and by the pension granted to her later on, the British Government proved that she had never ceased to be considered the true companion of the great man.

At this difficult juncture, Nelson's behaviour was deplorable. For form's sake he tried to get his wife to return, and he made her an allowance of £1,600, but in every other respect he behaved like a "child," justifying the sentence passed on him by his contemporaries. After the exposure made by Lady Nelson and which was the result of his conduct, his first duty was to live alone so as to avoid all further scandal. It was not absolutely necessary for him to break with Emma, for, as he had said, *he could not forget his obligations towards her.* At the same time he forgot that she was at least as much indebted to him. Had he contented himself with calling at Emma's house, in a formal way, he might have rehabilitated himself in the eyes of the world and, to some extent have redeemed his mistress's reputation. He would thus have avoided making Hamilton ridiculous and increasing Lady Nelson's grievances. But he never displayed much tact. He was a man, carried away by his first impulse and the strength of his passions, and as such he was incapable of acting wisely or even prudently. In his wife's presence he had not been able to keep back a tender reference to the loved one and, as soon as Lady Nelson left the home, his one thought was to return to Emma. Henceforward, the great man was to live under the most dishonourable and shameful conditions. He deceived his loyal friend, sharing the favours of a woman who had never been an honourable wife, but who was known throughout England, Italy, and the whole world, as having been a light of love.

Hamilton's blind credulity alone made the position possible. Nelson having dared to remark that he had not a place where to lay his head, good Sir William immediately offered him the shelter of his roof. Nelson de-

murred, suggesting that people might gossip, but Hamilton silenced his scruples by exclaiming: "A fig for the world!" And the bond was sealed.*

Nelson's family had not been over delighted at their celebrated brother's notorious *liaison*. Lady Hamilton had endeavoured to get introduced to them, but they closed their doors on her. After the scandal that accompanied Lord Nelson's separation from his wife, his brother, the Reverend William Nelson, said that Lady Hamilton only came to visit them in order to harm the relations of Great Jove (Nelson's nickname), adding that all the evil workings of her mind were now revealed as also her bad heart, which "Jove" had noticed. But the Reverend William was quite mistaken, for Nelson had not noticed anything of the sort. His brother may have tried to open his eyes and bring him back to the affection of his wife, but, seeing that he was wasting his time and that Nelson would break with his own family rather than separate from Lady Hamilton, the Reverend gentleman suddenly veered round and followed a very different line of conduct. He may have thought that a man of Nelson's importance could not be constrained to a strict line of conduct. Suddenly, he ceased being shocked at his brother's behaviour, and thought it wise to shower compliments and blessings on the woman he had previously decried. This was his way of admonishing the beautiful sinner. On February 19, 1801, he wrote her this letter which is a curious mixture of hypocrisy, gallantry, lies and pity:

* However, Hamilton had one lucid moment when it occurred to him that there might be some drawbacks to this strange arrangement. The following letter was written on February 19, 1801, just after Emma had secretly given birth to her child: "Not that I fear that Emma could ever be induced to act contrary to the prudent conduct she has hitherto pursued, but the world is so ill-natured." *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 200. (This letter refers to a visit of the Prince of Wales. Nelson was not even in London at the time.—The translator.)

February 19, 1801.

My dear Lady,

For I must call you by that name, and feel myself highly honoured in being permitted to do it. I cannot find words to express the grief I feel in leaving London and such amiable society as yours. Indeed, I have been scarcely able to speak a word the whole journey. Your image and voice are constantly before my imagination, and I can think of nothing else. I never knew what it was to part with a friend before, and it is no wonder my good, my virtuous, my beloved brother should be as much attached to your Ladyship after so long a friendship, when I feel so much after so short an acquaintance. May it continue unabated to the latest period of our lives! I hope it will not be very long before we all meet again. We are now in an inn, thirty miles from London, and have just finished our mutton chop. Mrs Nelson, who thinks of you, and loves you all as much as I do, has this moment given a toast: 'Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and Lord Nelson. God bless them,' to which I answer 'Amen, and Amen.' We shall pursue our journey to-morrow morning, and hope to reach home by dinner. We beg to join in the kindest regards and good wishes to Sir William.

I remain,

Your grateful and affectionate friend,

William Nelson.*

In England, as in Naples and on the homeward journey, the Hamiltons and Nelson were inseparable. They went together wherever they were invited and, in spite of her *embonpoint*, Emma never failed to show herself off in her favourite Attitudes. As a compliment to the hero of Aboukir, the Hamiltons were also invited when Nelson dined with the Prince of Wales, and the three friends were beside themselves with joy when His Royal Highness expressed a desire to hear Emma sing

* Mrs Gamlin, p. 153.

with Mme Banti.* They were no less delighted when the *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1800, praised the celebrated Attitudes.

Then an event occurred which passed unnoticed, because it was surrounded by the greatest secrecy. Emma gave birth to Horatia. Every detail had been thought out and planned, so that Emma's condition should remain a secret, and the father, who could not own his relationship, might be able to watch over the early years of the nameless child. Although Nelson had not wished to separate from his wife, the fact of her departure and Hamilton's welcome provided the child, at least for a time, with the family that it lacked.

Horatia has been referred to as Lady Hamilton's daughter, and this relationship has been accepted by almost all her biographers. However, as some violent defenders of Lady Hamilton still question Horatia's origin, it is necessary to relate as much as is known of the child's earliest days. It is an interesting account and begins like a novel. The following events took place in year 1801, in the early days of Romanticism, Anne Radcliffe and Walter Scott's heroes and heroines.

On a stormy night in January or February, a coach stopped at the door of a country-woman named Mistress Gibson. A beautiful and elegantly dressed young woman stepped out of the carriage, bearing in her arms a child only a few weeks old. This young woman was Lady Hamilton and the child Horatia. She gave the nurse endless instructions and promised to reward her generously. Then having placed a sum of money in her hands, the dazzling apparition fled away in this new Attitude of secret motherhood. She often returned to see the child. She came with Nelson, who would spend hours playing with the little girl, whom he called his dear child.

Long after these events, Mrs Gibson's daughter related these details to her husband, and she could have no reason for casting a slur on Nelson or Emma. Mrs

* February 19, 1801.

Gamlin does not deny the reliability of this account. To every unprejudiced mind there is no room for doubt. Horatia was the child of Nelson and Lady Hamilton, who alone took interest in her. The very name she bore was significant. Sir William must be left out of the question. Considering his age, and that during the ten years of his married life, no child had been borne to him, it would have been difficult to make him responsible for Horatia's birth. Emma indeed was full of forethought where her interests were concerned, but in this circumstance, she had not persuaded her husband to try the Celestial Bed in Graham's Temple of Apollo. Besides, knowing that the child was his and bestowing his name on her, Nelson may have recoiled from the thought of deceiving Hamilton once more, and allowing him to take charge of her as his own. Nelson surrounded Horatia with the deepest love and interest. The hero of Aboukir Bay and Naples played with her for hours, laughing and crying. Would his feelings have been so intense had she not been his own flesh and blood. It is evident that Horatia was the child of Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

Mrs Gamlin, however, is still unconvinced. As by her marriage, Emma had become a perfect angel, who could never have thought of breaking her vows, and Nelson was a God-fearing man who would never have intrigued with a married woman, it stands to reason that these two spotless beings cannot be the parents of the unfortunate little orphan. It was difficult to give a name to her father, but that detail can be easily passed over. So many other children have had no father. But Mrs Gamlin has no difficulty in providing her with a mother. She does not mention the mother's name; she alludes to her in a mysterious way as being a person of much higher condition than Lady Hamilton, who was the first to start this rumour. Moreover, in the Archives at Rome, there are a number of letters which were discovered in the palace at Caserta and written by Nelson and Emma to the Queen of Naples. These letters belong to the Queen

of Italy and are not shown to the public. They must undoubtedly contain the secret of Horatia's birth. In order to save Lady Hamilton, Mrs Gamlin does not hesitate to sacrifice the Queen whose reputation, it is true, was already somewhat tarnished.

Mrs Gamlin, however, has forgotten that the dates contradict her assertion. She forgets that at the time of Horatia's birth, Marie-Caroline was forty-eight years of age, having been born August 13, 1752. Although women may still bear children at this age, it seems improbable in the case of the Queen of Naples, who after having given birth to eighteen children between 1772 and 1793, had not had any since the last date.

Again, if Marie-Caroline had had an illegitimate child in 1801, she might easily have palmed it off on her husband, just as well as some of those she had already borne, who may not have been his, although it is asserted that she never took a lover except when there was no risk of placing a bastard upon the throne. Further, if against all possibility, she had been prevented from acknowledging the child, there was no plausible reason for its being sent to England, where she had no chance of seeing it again, rather than to Italy or to Austria, where she constantly travelled about, and might consequently, have been able to visit it from time to time. Besides, when a King or Queen have a child brought up secretly, they always provide for it. But this was not the case with Horatia, who had nothing but what Nelson left her.

Finally, one more consideration. If the child had been born in Naples, or during a voyage, towards the end of 1800, it would have been dangerous to take such a young babe across the sea to England. She would have been accompanied by a nurse, and the journey would have been perilous for the child's health and that of the nurse on whom she depended for her nourishment. As war was raging all over Europe, they would have been obliged to travel by a circuitous route, and the journey would have lasted at least two months.

Mrs Gamlin does not state absolutely that Horatia was Queen Marie-Caroline's child; she merely wishes to prove that Lady Hamilton was not Horatia's mother. The reasons that she puts forward are the following: At the time of Horatia's birth, Lady Hamilton went frequently into society. Almost every day she gave entertainments, where she danced and performed her Attitudes. Under these circumstances it would have been difficult for her to hide her condition.

She did not leave her husband's house at this period, and it would have been impossible to conceal the child without arousing suspicion. How could Emma account for the weakness following on the event itself! And after bringing the child to Nurse Gibson, would she have been in a fit condition to return and amuse her guests.

These are the only objections made by Mrs Gamlin. They may all be covered in this one question: "How could a society woman conceal from her husband and friends, first her condition, and then the accouchement?"

Such events take place daily; it is a common occurrence for women to give birth to their child without anyone having previously noticed their condition. Others are able to resume their occupations so rapidly that the event passes off unnoticed. As another striking instance Mlle de la Vallière may be mentioned. No one suspected her condition when she was awaiting the birth of the daughter who was to be Mlle de Blois and, on the evening after her deliverance, she appeared at Court fully attired and *coiffée*. Such efforts certainly require a strong exercise of will and energy. Emma was just as hard-pressed as the unfortunate example here quoted. It was of the greatest importance to her to hide her condition from her husband. According to M. Fauchier Magnan, she performed her Attitudes towards the end of December, concealing by prodigies of cleverness and energy, the advanced state of her condition, and during the second fortnight of 1801, seeing that the event was imminent, she resolved to isolate herself completely. Under the pre-

text that she was suffering from one of those attacks of fever that often prostrated her in Naples, she remained in her private apartment. However improbable it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that Sir William never suspected the event that took place in his house in Piccadilly. When the impatient lover wrote expressing some anxiety with regard to his mistress's health, it was the husband who replied sending him the news of the invalid:

Piccadilly, February 19.

Whether Emma will be able to write to you to-day, or not, is a question . . .

February 20.

My dear Lord,

You need not be the least alarmed that Emma has commissioned me to send you the newspapers; and write you a line, to tell you that she is much better, having vomited naturally, and is now proposing to take a regular one of tartar emetic. All her convulsive complaints certainly proceed from a foul stomach; and I will answer for it, she will be in spirits to write to you herself to-morrow.

On March 7: "Emma is certainly much better, but not quite free from bile."*

It is impossible not to smile at such simplicity. Later, when Nelson and Emma presented the child to him as a little orphan whom they had adopted out of charity, the Ambassador did not hesitate to accept the truth of this strange story. One circumstance, had been of great use to Emma. In 1800 and 1801 she had become very stout, a fact which helped her in concealing her figure. Everybody knew that she was doomed to become a stout woman and details escaped observation. In a caricature which he drew just about the time of Horatia's birth, that is in February 1801, James Gillray makes Emma an enormous size. He must have seen her shortly before the child was born, when her condition was advanced.

* *The Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, pp. 200, 205, 209.

So much for Lady Hamilton's attitude before and after the birth of Nelson's daughter. The baptismal certificate runs thus: May 13, Horatia Nelson Thomson, born October 29, 1800. The date of the child's birth was altered so that no suspicion could touch Lady Hamilton as, in October 1800, she had not yet reached England.

Some have denied that Horatia was Lady Hamilton's child. It has been asserted that Lady Nelson's friends had almost persuaded Nelson to give up his mistress. When Emma felt that she was losing her hold on him, she understood the necessity of creating a bond that would link them together for life. Hamilton was getting very old and might die any day. What then would become of her if, by his will, she found herself in poorer circumstances than she had hitherto been accustomed to.* She reflected that the birth of a child would bind Nelson to her and that she would profit by the money he would provide for its education. Her condition and the child's birth were simply a cleverly played comedy, and Horatia was a substituted infant. It is difficult to understand, for, since the birth of Payne's child, she had had no children, although it was certainly not for lack of lovers. Emma had become very stout, and it is a known fact that *embonpoint* is not conducive to child-bearing. At that time there was much talk in Europe about Buonaparte and Josephine, who were childless; there was wild gossip about substituting an infant in order to ensure the dynasty, whose head, the Consul, was fast striding towards the Empire. No doubt these events suggested the rumours concerning Emma. M. Dubarry, who believes that Emma cheated Nelson,

* Lady Hamilton hoped that Nelson would be released by a divorce and then be free to marry her. Nelson's letters prove that he entertained the same hope. When Emma became a widow the plan was not abandoned, but Nelson had not time to put it into execution. He left England in the May of 1803, one month only after Hamilton's death. He remained at sea until 1805, when he returned to Merton where he remained five weeks and was then called off to Trafalgar.

bases his opinion on M. Forgues, who admits that he was influenced by English criticisms.*

It does not seem that this opinion deserves much credit. To the proofs already mentioned it may be added, by way of final argument, that if Emma had been deceiving Nelson, she would have given him a boy and not a girl, for the Admiral would have been happy had Emma presented him with a son on whom he could bestow his name, his title and his fame.†

Mrs Gamlin describes Horatia when she was over fifty. She was a thin woman, with a long nose. Her features were more refined than Nelson's, but recalled his face. Without attaching undue importance to it, this

* Maurice Dubarry, *Nelson Adultère*. This book is quite fanciful and cannot be quoted as an authority.

† This is proved by the following letter :

Deal. July 31, 1801.

My dearest Emma,

. . . You are never out of my thoughts . . . you need not fear all the women in this world, for all others' except yourself, are pests to me. I know but one ; for, who can be like my Emma ? I am confident, you will do nothing which can hurt my feelings ; and I will die by torture, sooner than do anything which could offend you. Give ten thousand kisses to my dear Horatia. (He then speaks about vaccinating the child and of the peerage bestowed on him.) The extension of the patent of peerage is going on, . . . the old patent may extend by issue male of my own carcase. I am not so very old ; and may marry again, a wife more suitable to my genius.

Ever, for ever, yours
only yours,
Nelson and Bronte.

(*Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 43.)

This letter which Lady Hamilton certainly did not show to her husband, proves first, that Horatia's birth inspired Nelson with the hope of having a son ; secondly, that he certainly was thinking of divorce and of marrying Emma, who was "more suitable to his genius."

Referring to this same point Mr Walter Sichel gives a very interesting letter, but does not mention from where it is drawn : "Your dear friend, my dear and truly beloved Mr T. is almost distracted, he wishes there was peace or if your uncle (Hamilton) would die, he would instantly come and marry you, for he doats on nothing but you and his child—He has implicit faith in your fidelity" (*op. cit.* p. 359).

resemblance should be remembered. According to Mrs Gamlin, the very fact that Horatia was brought up by Lady Hamilton proves that she was not her child. Had she really been her daughter, she would have treated her as she had treated her first child. Nelson and she would have been afraid that the little girl's presence might betray their secret. The argument is an ingenious one, but Mrs Gamlin forgets the strength of Nelson's paternal love, and that he obliged Emma to receive the child.

Mrs Gamlin also states that Lady Nelson never suspected her husband of infidelity; Captain Hardy, his faithful friend, never entertained a doubt either! The letter which has been quoted in the note on page 281 is proof of his infidelity. Besides, if Lady Nelson was not fully convinced of the fact, why did she separate from her husband. As for Hardy, it was very natural that he should defend his friend, and so allow his widow to venerate his memory. But of all people in the world, he knew best the real state of affairs, for it was he who hung the portraits of Emma and Horatia in Nelson's cabin.*

A few weeks after her recovery, in the full bloom of renewed health and youth, Lady Hamilton started her receptions once more. One day in April a brilliant company, in which the masculine element as usual prevailed, was gathered at her house. Amongst her guests were Sir John Macpherson, the Duke of Queensberry, Lord William Gordon, M. de Calonne, former Minister of Louis XVI, Charles Greville, the Duke of Noia, a Neapolitan patrician, Mr Kemble, the celebrated actor, and his wife, the Rev. William Nelson, Nelson's brother, who never allowed himself to be forgotten, and finally Sir William and Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, who relates the following incident. News of Nelson's victory at Copenhagen and of the destruction of the Danish fleet had just reached England. The memory of the palmy

* Nelson writing to Lady Hamilton from the *Victory*, Toulon, August 1, 1803. *Nelson's Letters*, No. 33.

LADY HAMILTON

From a painting by Romney in the Collection of Sir Ernest Cassel, G.C.B.

days in Naples still haunted Emma. Forgetting that she was no longer twenty, and always eager to put herself forward despite the fact that it would have been wiser not to show off her somewhat imposing figure, she rose, exclaiming: "Come, a tarentelle in honour of Lord Nelson!" In spite of his age, he was then seventy-two, "Sir William began it with her, and maintained the conflict, for such it might well be esteemed, during some minutes, when, unable longer to continue it, the Duke de Noia took his place; but he, too, though near forty years younger than Sir William, soon gave in. Lady Hamilton sent for her own maid-servant, who being presently exhausted, was relieved by another female attendant, a Copt, perfectly black, whom Lord Nelson had presented to her on his return from Egypt."*

Having examined Emma's behaviour during the months that preceded Horatia's birth, and the manner in which she concealed the actual event, assisted by Mrs Cadogan as midwife, it is no less interesting to study Nelson's attitude towards his child, which was that of an extremely affectionate father. He went into ecstasies over the babe, and was the more devoted to it as he had given up all hope of ever having a child. In his letters to Lady Hamilton, he speaks exactly like a father discussing his child with the mother. On July 31, 1801, he suggested that Horatia should be vaccinated. As the custom was a new one, he gave Emma such details as he knew. For instance, the child of one of his friends having been vaccinated, suffered from fever for two days, etc. "However," he adds, "do as you please." Could anything be more natural! As the child's father, he gives his advice, but he does not force it on the mother, who has also a right to decide in such matters.

Hamilton is not drawn into these details, although he and Emma were now living in Nelson's house at Merton. This constitutes a new proof.

When Hamilton died, Horatia's name occurs still more

* Mrs Gamlin, page 169.

frequently in Nelson's correspondence. The child's birth is no longer veiled in mystery. Nelson himself clears away all doubt and uncertainty in the first letter which he wrote to Horatia on October 21, 1803, when she was about two and a half years old. It begins thus: "My dear child, receive the last letter of your affectionate father . . ." After having sung the praises of Lady Hamilton, he winds up by these words, "and believe me my dear Horatia, your most affectionate father, Nelson and Brontë."

On the eve of Trafalgar, he sent her the following lines:

Victory,
October 19, 1805.

My dearest Angel,

I was made happy by the pleasure of receiving your letter of September 19th, and I rejoice to hear that you are so very good a girl, and love my dear Lady Hamilton, who most dearly loves you. Give her a kiss for me. The combined fleets of the enemy, are now reported to be coming out of Cadiz; and therefore I answer your letter, my dearest Horatia, to mark to you that you are ever uppermost in my thoughts. I shall be sure of your prayers for my safety, conquest, and speedy return to dear Merton, and our dearest good Lady Hamilton. Be a good girl, mind what Miss Connor says to you.

Believe my dearest Horatia, the affectionate parental blessing of your father

Nelson and Bronte.*

It is not possible to believe that any but a father could send these lines of deep affection to a child. He would not give her his paternal blessing or call himself her father.

He wished Horatia to be taken away from Nurse Gibson and entrusted to Lady Hamilton at Merton.

* Pettigrew, vol. ii, page 516.

(August 1, 1803.) He showed the most tender foresight in all that concerned the little girl. A stream running through his estate had been named the Nile in memory of his victory. In one of his letters to Emma, he said that a netting three feet high must be set around it, so that the "little thing may not tumble in." At the same time, ducks might be reared.

On another occasion he wrote: "Everything that you tell me about my dear Horatia charms me. I think I see her, hear her and admire her, but she is like her dear, dear mother." (May 30, 1804.)

This "dear mother" can be no one but the woman to whom the letter was addressed. It would have been inconsiderate towards Emma had he spoken of any other woman in this way while writing to her.

The mother was far from sharing the father's eagerness to see the little girl under her roof. It might sometimes be convenient to have a child in the house,—for instance, when one was wanted in a *tableau vivant* representing Medea,—but otherwise it would be a nuisance. As she had no heart, Lady Hamilton could not feel maternal love. After taking her home for a while, she had definitely abandoned her daughter Emma. Indeed she had only brought her to Greville for his amusement, just as she might have brought a doll or a puppy. The beautiful heartless woman felt no love for Horatia, but Nelson prevailed and absolutely insisted on the child living with its mother. He had to overcome Emma's resistance, and contant references to this plan occur in his letters. "Kiss dear Horatia, I hope she is at Merton, fixed." Nelson underlined the word. And again: "How is my dear Horatia? I hope you have her under your guardian wing at Merton." (March 9, 1805.)*

At length Emma gave way, and reluctantly consented to play the part of a mother. Nelson was too deeply in love with her to notice how callous she really was, and he calls her the Guardian Angel in a letter written to his

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, p. 76-90.

three-year-old daughter, and which, of course, the mother was to read.

Victory,
April 23, 1804.

My dear Horatia,

I send you twelve books of Spanish dresses which you will let your Guardian Angel, Lady Hamilton, etc.

However, neither Nelson or Lady Hamilton could openly acknowledge the proof of their misconduct. As long as the great man lived, Horatia enjoyed his affection. After his death, Lady Hamilton kept her as her only safeguard. When she disappeared, the girl found herself alone in the world, having no family, no name, and surrounded by a mystery which was transparent to all around her, but which no one cared to reveal to her. On one occasion, after she had been married for many years, the poor woman made a single attempt to clear up the mystery and wrote to Nelson's last friend, old Haslewood. She received the following discouraging reply, in which, however, the truth stands out too clearly.

Brighton,
September 26, 1840.

My dear Madam,

I dare not write so fully as I could wish on the topics referred to in your kind letter of the 23rd, lest the secret which I am bound to keep should be rendered too transparent. Thus much only may be said without rendering such risk. Your mother was well acquainted with Lady Hamilton, and saw you often during your infancy; but soon after her marriage she went to reside at a considerable distance from London which she never visited afterwards. Lamenting that I cannot be more communicative

I remain, always my dear Madam,
faithfully yours,
Wm. Haslewood.*

* *Blackwood's Magazine*. May 1888.

From this letter, it may be gathered that Horatia, believing Nelson to be her adopted father, had only asked for her mother's name; but Nelson and Emma had made their faithful friend promise never to reveal their secret. So Haslewood was compelled to invent the romantic story of a young girl who had had a child before being married. This tale does not bear investigation, for the daughter of Nurse Gibson stated that Nelson and Lady Hamilton were the only people who came to see Horatia. Hamilton's wife was surely the child's mother. Haslewood admits it unconsciously. Up to the present time, Horatia's parentage has never been questioned. It seems that a certain school is growing up, capable of denying all evidence. It is therefore necessary to gather together all the facts that can throw light on this point.

With regard to Nelson, it has been established that his tender affection for Horatia can only be explained by the fact that she was in reality his own child, borne to him by the woman he worshipped. However, without adopting the one view more than the other, and in the sole interest of truth, it is necessary to reproduce here a singular document that casts fresh doubts on the subject. This is a letter written by Nelson to Lady Hamilton on May 16, 1805, when, her husband being dead, it would be imagined that Nelson could correspond freely with her. And yet, in this letter, he expressly called Horatia his "adopted child." "I again and again, my dearest friend, request your care of my adopted daughter."* On closer examination another singularity occurs, and appears to explain the first one. In this letter Nelson writes "My dear Lady Hamilton." Now, for years he had ceased using this cold formal appellation, although occasionally it appears in their correspondence, notably in a letter written on August 24, 1803. This anomaly is certainly to be accounted for, and the following may be taken as a very plausible explanation. Nelson had every

* Mrs Gamlin, p. 193. This letter was not published in the edition of 1814.

reason to fear that his letters might fall into the hands of the enemy, or fall into the possession of people who were not to be initiated into his secrets. Sometimes an officer or a friend undertook to see that the missive reached its destination safely. When this was the case, Nelson mentioned it in his letter. On other occasions, when he was obliged to trust to the official mail, he may not have felt so sure, and consequently adopted a more cautious style. No doubt, Emma had been warned, so that when her lover's letter was less tender and expansive she knew what it meant.

Besides the proof here mentioned, the Thomson Letters published in Pettigrew's *Life of Nelson* settle beyond doubt the question of Horatia's parentage. However, as the author was not able to produce the original documents, some may consider them forgeries, and Mrs Gamlin takes advantage of this circumstance to invalidate their testimony.

Nelson burnt Emma's letters, but she kept his, displaying thereby more prudence than she generally indulged in. They constituted a guarantee for the future. They were the poetical effusions of the lover who rejoiced and was proud of his fatherhood, that united him for ever to the woman he loved. We may wonder whether he felt no sting of remorse in the presence of the honest and over-trustful Hamilton, who was thus odiously betrayed by the two beings he cherished most in the world. "Not that I fear that Emma could ever be induced to act, contrary to the prudent conduct," etc., he wrote. How did Nelson feel as he read those words, which, in their simplicity, conveyed such a bitter reproach. No doubt he remained unmoved, for he was entirely absorbed by his passion, and the habit of deceiving had deadened in him all nicer feelings and made him worthy of his mistress, who was indeed:

> . . . de ces femmes hardies
> Qui goûtant dans le crime une tranquille paix
> Ont su se faire un front qui ne rougit jamais.

Moreover, in this singular ménage Hamilton played a very insignificant part. Gradually, ever since he had been pensioned off, he had faded into the background and become a mere cipher. This is always the fate of a husband who allows himself to be over-ruled. What could Hamilton expect, he who had taken into his own house the celebrated man who was his wife's lover. To crown his glory still more effectually, Nelson had been raised to the peerage. The behaviour of the Rev. William Nelson towards his brother's mistress was a source of great edification to the world in general. His faith in Emma he preserved up to the moment when his brother died and she lost her revenues. In the meanwhile, as he was intent on making his way, he laid her influence under contribution in the most barefaced way.

"Now we have received the Peerage, we have only one thing to ask, and that is my promotion in the Church, handsomely and honourably, such as becomes Lord Nelson's brother and heir-apparent to the title. *No put-off with small beggarly stalls.* Mr Addington must be kept steady to that point. I am sure Nelson is doing everything for him. But a word is enough for your good sensible heart."*

Happy and proud of being of so much importance, Lady Hamilton made every effort to further his ambition.

As Emma was always keenly alive to her own interests, it was no doubt she who had prompted Nelson to make a tour through the Kingdom. It goes without saying that she accompanied him on this journey. As she appeared with him in the various towns they visited, some part of his glory seemed to be reflected on her. But even this could not equal the satisfaction she enjoyed at seeing herself the object of envy to all the women whom she crushed by her greatness. In the midst of these ovations, the husband cut rather a poor figure. He even excited the commiseration of a man named Gore, who in July 1802 wrote from Tenby to the actor Elliston: "I

* Mrs Gamlin, p. 220.

was yesterday witness to an exhibition which, though greatly ridiculous, was not wholly so, for it was likewise pitiable, and this was in the persons of two individuals who have lately occupied much public attention. I mean the Duke of Bronte, Lord Nelson, and Emma, Lady Hamilton. The whole town was at their heels as they walked together. The lady is grown immensely fat and equally coarse, while her 'companion in arms' has taken to the other extreme—thin, shrunken, and to my impression in bad health. They were evidently vain of each other, as though the one would have said: 'This is the Horatio of the Nile,' and the other: 'This is the Emma of Sir William.' Poor Sir William, wretched, but not abashed, he followed at a short distance, bearing in his arms a *cucciolo* and other emblems of combined folly."*

It is easy to picture the whole scene. The three friends returned to town with several carriages full of the rich presents which had been offered to them on their journey. Lady Hamilton was delighted, and wrote to Mr Davison that they had had a very agreeable trip, that would make more than one of Nelson's enemies "burst" with envy. Another circumstance was likely to make some of Emma's own good friends "burst" with envy. A son of Mr Burt, whom she had met previously, had painted a full-length portrait representing Nelson crowned by Britannia, and the artist had reproduced Lady Hamilton's features in the allegorical figure.

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

CHAPTER XIV

Lady Hamilton buys the estate of Merton in Nelson's name—Life at Merton—The death of Sir William Hamilton—His widow attempts to get a pension from the Government—Nelson returns to Naples—His correspondence with Lady Hamilton—Back at Merton—Lady Hamilton urges him to rejoin the fleet—Trafalgar—After Nelson's death—Lady Hamilton's pecuniary difficulties—The death of Greville—Pursued by creditors—Flight to Calais—Death of Lady Hamilton.

ON his return from this little triumphant progress through the land, which Nelson had undertaken at the suggestion of his mistress, and which was scarcely in good taste or in keeping with his natural feelings of modesty, he had been obliged to re-embark, but before leaving he and his friends made a plan by which their lives should be more closely associated. Nelson had decided to purchase a country house, and to live there with Sir William and his wife, who were to share with him the expenses of the establishment. In spite of Emma's willingness to sacrifice her jewels, financial difficulties prevented the former Ambassador from making any such acquisition at the time. The Admiral refers to these two points in a letter written from Deal, on board the *Medusa*, August 18 and 31:

"I entreat you, my dear friend, to work hard for me, and get the house and furniture; and I will be so happy to lend it to you and Sir William!

"Therefore, if you was to take the Duke's house, *a cake-house*, open to every body he pleases, you had better have a booth at once; you never could rest one moment quiet. Why did not the Duke assist Sir William, when he wanted his assistance? why not have saved you

from the distress, which Sir William must every day feel in knowing that his excellent wife sold her jewels to get a house for him; whilst his own relations, great as they are in the foolish world's eye, would have left a man of his respectability and age, to have lodged in the streets. . .

"Sir William owes his life to you; which I believe, he will never forget."*

Nelson was not to be long separated from his friends. During his absence he was preoccupied by business matters that seem to have been the preliminaries of his cherished plan of divorce. This, at least, is what may be gathered from a note written to Lady Hamilton on September 26, 1801, on board the *Amazon*: "I had, yesterday, a letter from my father; he seems to think, that he may do something which I shall not like. I suppose, he means, going to Somerset Street.†

"Shall I, to an old man, enter upon the detestable subject; it may shorten his days. But, I think, I shall tell him, that I cannot go to Somerset Street to see him. But, I shall not write till I hear your opinion."‡

As usual, the lover was weak in the hands of his mistress. Great lovers behave like overgrown children. They must constantly sacrifice their will and dignity, annihilating themselves at the feet of the woman who has them in her power. The mistress even settles how the lover is to behave towards the members of his family. Nelson was as weak as any other man, and allowed Emma to dictate to him his conduct towards his father and Lady Nelson.

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 54. No doubt, Nelson here refers to Emma's care of her husband, when he was laid up with a bilious fever. Out of gallantry, Hamilton had said that he owed his life to her attentions. This Emma was very willing to believe and repeated it on all sides. As a man is bound to believe every word a woman, and more especially his mistress says, Nelson remained convinced. This accounts for the above sentence, in which he seems to take rather the tone of a preacher, a habit no doubt he inherited from his father, the vicar. In any case it proves that he commanded in Hamilton's house.

† Probably Lady Nelson's home.

‡ *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 63.

About the middle of October, Lady Hamilton had chosen the beautiful estate of Merton. Looking forward to the time when she should do the honours of the house for him, the Admiral wrote on October 26, praising the choice she had made. "It is, I thank God, only six days before I shall be with you, and be shown all the beauties of Merton."* Like all sailors, Nelson was delighted at the prospect of leading a peaceful country life. He did not want to be bothered with visits or any social duties. He meant to live in retirement, in the sole companionship of the Hamiltons and a few dearly loved sailor friends. As soon as the Hamiltons had acquired Merton in Nelson's name, they settled down there, awaiting his return. Lady Hamilton seemed to delight in the homely duties of a country housewife. Writing to Nelson on October 16, 1801, Sir William said: "It would make you laugh to see Emma and her mother fitting up pigstyes and hencoops."† Whereupon Nelson gracefully replied to his mistress: "How I should laugh to see you, my dear friend, rowing in a boat; the beautiful Emma rowing a one-armed Admiral in a boat! it will certainly be caricatured! . . . You will make us rich with your economy."‡

Indeed caricaturists had not spared Nelson and Lady Hamilton. In February 1801 James Gillray represented the Admiral as Mark Antony, and Lady Hamilton as Cleopatra, but grotesquely and monstrously stout. Beneath the drawing were four verses, the last of which is alone worth repeating.

Ah where, and ah where is my gallant Sailor gone?
He's gone to fight the Frenchmen for George upon the Throne;
He's gone to fight the Frenchmen t'loose t'other Arm and Eye,
And left me with the old Antiques to lay me down and cry.§

This shaft is aimed not only at Sir William's collection, but at Sir William himself Others took off Emma and

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 79.

† Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 224.

‡ *Idem*, p. 230.

§ The genuine works of John Gillray, B. M. Print Room,

her attitudes. Rehberg's sketches were caricatured and bore the following inscription: "A new edition, considerably enlarged, of Attitudes, faithfully copied from Nature, humbly dedicated to the Admirers of the Grand and Sublime. 1807."*

So much for the caricatures. As for the "economy," Nelson must have been very naive if he did not smile as he wrote that word, for Emma's economies are reminiscent of those of the Empress Josephine, her contemporary and rival in extravagance. However, at Merton Lady Hamilton kept the accounts of the household just as she had kept them for Greville, and this gave an appearance of order to her wild expenditure. The expenses were divided equally between Nelson and Hamilton, and amounted to about £3,000 or £4,000 a year. They shared the expenses of their common home just as they shared the favours of its mistress. Hamilton himself had written on October 16, 1801: "*Our* dear Emma."

He was not to say this much longer, and he felt it, for in anticipation of his death, he drew up his will. His pension of £1200 ceased with his death, but he had some property of his own, the whole of which he bequeathed to his nephew, Charles Greville, the Deputy Lord Chamberlain. It would seem that at length the family spirit had got the better of his blind love. By these arrangements he made it clear that his wife must henceforth be content to live in reduced circumstances, for he left her a small annual income of £700, charged upon an estate near Swansea, which he had inherited from his first wife, and which returned a yearly income of £5000. Already, on another occasion, before he married Emma, he had given her various objects that had belonged to his wife. The most elementary feelings of delicacy should have kept him from providing for his former mistress by money drawn from his dead wife's fortune.

On April 6, 1803, Sir William died, "his hand in that

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

of his wife, and his head on Lord Nelson's breast."* On April 2 the Admiral had written to Captain Murray: "I much doubt his holding twenty-four hours longer—our dear Lady is dreadfully afflicted."† He had held out four more days. The newspapers sang the praises of the deceased, at the same time extolling the virtues of his widow, and this to such an extent that they could not have said more had it been she who had died. Towards the end of his life Hamilton no longer laboured under the delusions of the past, and would most certainly not have dictated this exaggerated panegyric on Emma. He had suffered most cruelly through her neglect and the vexations that destroyed the peace of his home. He had complained with dignity and some show of bitterness. There had even been some question of a separation. Perhaps he had discovered or at least suspected the deceit that was being practised on him, but no one can know. The two beings whom he had loved best in the world, and who had grossly betrayed him, were indeed by his death-bed, as he breathed his last, but it must not be forgotten that he bequeathed a mere pittance of £700 to the woman he had entrusted with the honour of his house, and to whom he had sacrificed all worldly considerations. The reason is clear enough.

Lady Hamilton was now a widow. She had reached that dignity and condition in which a woman is free to act as she pleases and indulge in all her fancies without being answerable so anyone. Henceforward she was mistress of her own actions, and she was happy. The comparatively small bequest which Hamilton left his wife, was much commented on in London. This circumstance, together with the difference of age that existed between the two; the recollection of the painful discussions that had taken place,—perhaps not always on the subject of her extravagance,—and above all, the thought of the lover to whom she wished more than ever to devote her life, contributed to stop the flow of tears that Emma was

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 179. † *Dispatches*, vol. v. p. 55.

bound to weep in the face of the world, but which did not spring from her heart. Her feelings were no longer those which she expressed so ostentatiously in her letters to Greville. She wore with a touch of coquetry even the robes of mourning imposed on her by the laws of convention, but still continued to receive her friends and to entertain. Mme. Le Brun, who met her at the time of her bereavement, says: "When I went to London in 1803, Lady Hamilton had just lost her husband. I called at her house, and she immediately came to see me, clothed in the deepest mourning. She was wrapped in an enormous black veil, and her beautiful hair was cut short and dressed *à la Titus*, according to the prevailing fashion. This Andromache seemed huge to me, for she had become extremely stout. She wept, and said she was much to be pitied, for the death of the Chevalier had bereft her of a father and a friend, and that she would never be comforted. I must confess that her grief made slight impression on me, for she seemed to me to be only playing a part. I was most certainly not mistaken for, a few minutes later, having noticed some music on my piano, she started singing one of her songs."*

After the death of Hamilton, Nelson left Merton, and settled in Albemarle Street. Emma had every reason to remember her husband with gratitude but, in spite of the flowing robes of black which she exhibited, she keenly appreciated the freedom that came to her in her new state. Says Regnard: Oui-dà, l'état de veuve est une douce chose! Whilst Nelson made ready for his divorce, she would make ready for her second marriage. In the meantime she was obliged to give her attention to business matters. She had no idea what feelings Charles Greville entertained towards her. As she had some cause to fear that they might not be favourable, she wrote him a formal note by means of which she carefully reconnoitred the ground before her, and avoided the stumbling block of terms that might appear too affec-

* *Mémoires*, Mme Le Brun.

tionate or too cold. Her style is very different from that of the tender loving letters she wrote to him from Naples. Times had changed. The matter in hand was business, and in all ages business must come before love affairs. The note ran thus:

April 1803.

Lady Hamilton will be glad to know how long Mr Greville can permit her to remain in the house in Piccadilly, as she must instantly look out for a lodging; and therefore, it is right for her to know the full extent of time she can remain there. She also begs to know, if he will pay her debts, and what she may depend upon; that she may reduce her expences and establishment immediately.*

Greville was well disposed towards his former mistress. On June 8, 1803, he wrote to her saying that he regretted the amount of her debts was so great that he could not pay them all, but offered to advance a certain sum. He added that she had no cause to distrust him, as he was anxious to settle everything to her satisfaction.

Indeed, Greville's attitude was always perfectly polite, but beneath his courteous manner there ran an undercurrent of hostile coldness. He had good reason to remember that Emma was a spendthrift on whom painful experiences made no impression. He foresaw that she would soon be without means, and knowing that she had as little dignity as sense of economy, he guessed that she would appeal to him in her penury. This he was most anxious to avoid. Taking counsel of prudence and foresight rather than of any kinder feeling, he affected a coolness whereby he kept Emma at a distance, and avoided being importuned.

The question of money seems to have outweighed all other considerations, and Hamilton's widow spent her time soliciting and intriguing on all sides to obtain a pension or some subsidies, and draw down on herself the

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 273.

good-will of all. To the Prime Minister, Addington, she wrote:

April 13, 1803.

Sir,

May I trouble you, and but for a moment, in consequence of my irreparable loss; my ever-honoured husband, Sir William Hamilton, being no more. I cannot avoid it, I am forced to petition for a portion of his pension. . . And, may I mention—what is well known to the then administration at home,—how I, too, strove to do all I could towards the service of our King and Country. The fleet itself I can truly say, could not have got into *Sicily*, but for what I was happily able to do with the Queen of Naples, and through her secret instructions so obtained: on which depended the refitting of the fleet in Sicily; and, with that, all which followed so gloriously at the Nile.*

She also wrote to the President of the Board of Trade:

I hope you will call on me when you come to town, and I promise you not to bore you with my own claims; for if those who have power will not do me justice, I must be quiet, and in revenge to them I can say, if ever I am a minister's wife again, with the power I had then, why, I will again do the same for my country as I did before; and I did more than any Ambassador did though their pockets were filled with secret service money, and poor Sir William and myself never got even a pat on the back.†

She appealed once more to the Prime Minister, besetting him with her petitions, and persuading her friends to support her claims. In the following letter she begged Sir William Scott to bring into notice the importance of her imaginary services.

If you, my dear Sir William, will beg of Mr Addington to think of me, and may I hope he will think

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii. pp. 131-132,

† Diaries, Hon. G. Rose, p. 241.

favourably, for without his assistance I shall be in great embarrissement. Lord Nelson has told me that he is good, great we know he is. My relation, the Duke of Queensbury, has told me that he means well, and will give me his protection. You, Sir, are his friend, and can say something to him for me. I could convince him that I did much to serve my Country. *When I was in power* I never thought on myself, and now, my husband is dead, our dear friend, the glorious Nelson far away I have nobody, for I lived so retired, I don't try to make friends.*

In spite of a thousand efforts, and the recommendation of influential friends, her petitions were of no avail. A less sanguine character could have understood that no self-respecting Government would believe in her merits. Nelson, with a lover's blindness, shared her illusions, just as he believed in everything his mistress did or said. He himself made her an annual allowance of £1200. To his wife, Lady Nelson, he gave £1600; but all his affections were absorbed by Emma and his daughter.

Very shortly after Sir William's death Nelson had been obliged to go to sea again. He sailed on May 18. Four days later, at 8 o'clock in the morning, he sent these comforting lines to the widow:

Be assured, that my attachment, and affectionate regard is unalterable; nothing can shake it! And, pray, say so to my dear Mrs T.—when you see her. Tell her that my love is unbounded, to her and her dear sweet child; and, if she should have more, it will extend to all of them. In short, my dear Emma, say everything to her, which your dear, affectionate, heart and head can think of.†

In July 1803, Nelson arrived with his squadron at Naples. Times had changed, and the sovereigns who had showered so many favours and tokens of affection on

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

† *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 109. It will be remembered that this Mrs Thomson was no other than Lady Hamilton. To baffle all inquiries Horatia had been named Nelson-Thomson on her birth certificate.

Emma seemed to have forgotten her existence. The Admiral wrote to Lady Hamilton: "I send you copies of the King and Queen's letters. I am vexed, that she does not mention you! I can only account for it, by her's being a political letter."*

Nelson did not realize that the selfish Queen had cast Lady Hamilton aside as a useless tool now that she had no longer any need of her services. He did not reflect that whereas the Queen ought to have remained attached to him, since there was a guilty bond of crime between them, she could not forget that through his influence the island of Malta had remained in the hands of the English. These considerations suffice to explain the coolness towards him and his mistress.

Nevertheless, Nelson wrote to Marie-Caroline, and tried to rekindle her former friendship for Lady Hamilton. "When I wrote to the Queen, I said: 'I left Lady Hamilton, the eighteenth of May; and so attached to your Majesty, that I am sure that she would lay down her life to preserve yours. Your Majesty never had a more sincere, attached, and real friend, than your dear Emma. You will be sorry to hear that good Sir William did not leave her in such comfortable circumstances as his fortune would have allowed. He has given it amongst his relations. But she will do honour to his memory, although every one else of his friends call loudly against him on that account.' I trust, my dear Emma, she has wrote you. If she can forget Emma, I hope God will forget her."†

Nelson then wrote a few words on political matters, and with wonderful foresight declared that sooner or later Buonaparte would take Naples, but the English would maintain King Ferdinand in Sicily. He then expressed a wish to have letters from Merton, and gave news of friends whom Lady Hamilton had met in former days. The whole tone of the letter is very reserved, as though the Admiral feared it might fall into the enemy's hands.

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 114.

† *Dispatches*, vol. v, p. 118.

In another letter Nelson speaks of his brother the Reverend William. He was not a man to let himself be overlooked, and was dying to be made a bishop. Although Nelson had known Emma for ten years, his letters are full of compliments such as a newly fledged lover might write: 'In short, in every point of view, from Ambassatrice to the duties of domestic life, I never saw your equal."* (*August* 24, 1803.)

"I only desire, my dearest Emma, that you will always believe, that Nelson's your own; Nelson's *Alpha* and *Omega* is *Emma*! I cannot alter; my affection and love is, beyond even this world! Nothing can shake it, but yourself; and that, I will not allow myself to think, for a moment is possible."†

These ardent tender words were indeed the sincere expression of Nelson's love. They call to the mind the equally passionate lines that Buonaparte wrote, six years before, from Italy to the wife he had just wedded. In this same letter, Nelson seems to have felt a pang of jealousy. Perhaps she had given him some excuse to feel uneasy, as Josephine gave Buonaparte.

"But, I will have neither P's nor Q's come near you! No; not the slice of Single Gloster! But, if I was to go on, it would argue that want of confidence which would be injurious to your honour."‡

These incidents, however, did not deter him from his intention of marrying her, though she seems to have deserved the confidence he placed in her just as little as she had deserved Sir William's.

"I rejoice that you had so pleasant a trip into Norfolk; and I hope, one day, to carry you there by a nearer *tie* in law, but not in love and affection, than at present."§

He then went on to express the hope that the war

* *Dispatches*, vol. v, p. 172.

† *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 136.

‡ *Idem*, p. 136.

§ *Idem*, p. 137.

would not last much longer, and referred again to the joy of meeting her once more. "Even the thought of it vibrates through my nerves; for, my love for you is as unbounded as the ocean."* Nelson wound up this long letter by the following words: "I have wrote to Dumourier; therefore, I will only trouble you to say how much I respect him."† A strange remark for him to make! However, it was natural that the man who had not respected the capitulation of the forts of Naples, should respect a traitor.

On October 18, after having written to Emma that he appreciated and reciprocated all her love and affection, Nelson turned to business matters and their marriage. "If Mr Addington gives you the pension, it is well; but, do not let it fret you. Have you not Merton? It is clear—the first purchase,—and my dear Horatia is provided for: and, I hope, one of these days, that you will be my own Duchess of Brontë; and, then, a fig for them all." . . "You cannot, I am sure, more ardently long to see me, than I do to be with you; and, if the war goes on, it is my intention to get leave to spend the *next winter* in England; but I verily believe that, long before that time, we shall have peace."‡

However, Nelson's cruise was prolonged beyond all expectation. From on board the *Victory*, in sight of Majorca, he once more renewed his protestations of love: "You may safely rely, that I can for ever repeat, with truth, these words—for ever I love you and only you, my Emma; and, you may be assured, as long as you are the same to me, that you are never absent a moment from my thoughts."§ On March 14, in sight of Toulon, he was still occupied with his mistress's interests, and entertained her with news that must have pleased her very much. "Whilst I am upon the subject of Brontë, I have one

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. i, p. 138.

† *Idem*, p. 144.

‡ *Idem*, pp. 157, 162.

§ *Idem*, vol. ii, p. 7.

MERTON, NELSON'S SEAT IN SURREY

Lady Hamilton and Horatia are seen in the centre, whilst Sir William is on the extreme right fishing by the tree

word more—and your good, dear, kind heart, must not think that I shall die one hour the sooner; on the contrary, my mind has been more content ever since I have done it: I have left you a part of the rental of Brontë, to be first paid every half year, and in advance."*

It is clear from the following letter that the practical Emma had questioned Nelson about the prize-money which he had won during the cruise, for the matter-of-fact, plebeian soul that slept in her, never forgot her interests. Nelson replied: "I can assure you, for prizes taken within the Mediterranean, I have not more than paid my expences."† The father's loving forethought appears in the following letter: "I also beg, as my dear Horatia is to be at Merton, that a strong netting, about three feet high, may be placed round the Nile, that the little thing may not tumble in; and, then, you may have ducks in it again."‡

The thought of marrying Hamilton's widow was never out of his mind. In a letter written on April 2, referring to a troublesome neighbour, he remarked jestingly: "Never mind the great Bashaw at the Priory. He be damned! If he was single, and had a mind to marry you, he could only make you a Marchioness; but, as he is situated, and I situated, I can make you a Duchess; and if it pleases God, that time may arrive, Amen—Amen."§ Nelson had no need to be anxious. She had made the same calculation and was content to bide her time. The longed-for moment was still deferred by the continuation of hostilities. A vessel bearing one of Emma's portraits had fallen into the hands of the French, and Nelson wrote, saying: "I find, my dearest Emma, that your picture is very much admired by the French Consul at Barcelona; and that he has not sent it to be admired—which I am sure it would be—by Buonaparte. They pretend that there were three pictures taken. . . But, from us, what

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, p. 12.

† *Idem*, vol. ii, p. 17. ‡ *Idem*, vol. ii, p. 14.

§ *Idem*, vol. ii, p. 23.

can they find out? That I love you most dearly; and hate the French most damnably."*

On May 27, Nelson refers to Marie-Caroline: "The histories of the Queen are beyond whatever I have heard from Sir William. . . The Queen's favourite, Lieutenant-Colonel St. Clair, was a subaltern; La Tour, the Captain in the navy; and another! However, I never touch on these matters; for, I care not how she amuses herself. . . The King is angry with her; his love is long gone by."† These last words are evidently written by a man who was very tolerant as to the different ideas of happiness which people make for themselves, and who understood that each temperament has its own.

It is curious to note that in a letter written on June 10, 1804, after having given news of the war, Nelson added: "You may communicate this to Mr Addington, if you think he does not know it."‡ The Admiral's intention was evidently to afford Emma occasion of reminding the Prime Minister of her petition for a pension.

In another letter, dated July 1, Nelson informed Lady Hamilton that the Queen of Naples seemed to have forgotten her completely. Then he entertained her with scraps of gossip about the Court, which were likely to amuse her. "The poor King is miserable at the loss of Acton. The Queen writes to me about 'honest Acton' etc. etc., and I hear, that she has been the cause of ousting him: and they say (her enemies) that her conduct is all French. That, I do not believe; although she is likely to be the dupe of French émigrés, who always beset her. I doubt much, my dear Emma, even her constancy of real friendship to you; although, in my letter to Acton, which Mr Elliot says he read to her, I mentioned the obligation she was under to you etc., in very strong terms."§

Vain efforts. The Queen turned a deaf ear on all these petitions.

Thus repulsed by her former friend, Emma did not

* *Dispatches*, vol. vi, p. 5.
† *Dispatches*, vol. vi, p. 37.
‡ *Dispatches*, vol. vi, p. 68.
§ *Dispatches*, vol. vi. p. 95.

remain silent. "She gave free scope to her venomous tongue," says a biographer of Marie-Caroline. "To her cost, the Queen of Naples was to learn that no one can condescend with impunity. Her past was laid bare and dragged through the London gutters. The most intimate secrets of her private life were revealed, and hawked about, from tavern to tavern. As her voice could not reach far enough, Emma Lyon took up her pen. The same writers of libels who had worked the ruin of Mme du Barry and Marie Antoinette, became frequent guests at her house. From London the most infamous satires against Marie-Caroline were issued and spread all over Europe. This was the end of the fervent friendship that had once united a daughter of the Cæsars and a dissolute wench off the London streets."*

All the caricatures, all the perfidious, cruel and atrocious deeds perpetrated in 1806 against the Queen of Naples by Napoleon's police, in order to prepare the mind of France for the invasion and conquest of her Kingdom, came from London, and consequently were Lady Hamilton's handiwork. The vengeance she chose was indeed base, but it was a terrible one.

Marie-Caroline was not the only one of Emma's former friends who excited Nelson's ire. He was also very indignant with Greville on account of his attitude regarding his uncle's inheritance. In a letter written on August 31, 1804, he calls Hamilton's nephew a "shabby fellow," and goes into all sorts of details on legal proceedings, in order to make good his assertion. All his letters are full of the most affectionate protestations of love. Thus on October 13, 1804, he wrote to Emma: "My life, my soul, may God in heaven bless you."

Lady Hamilton wrote regularly to Nelson. Her letters were also profusely sprinkled with prayers, blessings and amens. She had caught this habit no doubt from her lover, the clergyman's son. Although Emma's spelling was still somewhat defective, and the rules of

* A. Gagnière, *op. cit.*, pp. 300-301.

prosody were unfamiliar to her, she took it into her head to write poetry in honour of Nelson, so as to give him a further token of her love, and at the same time, keep him well in hand until the projected marriage was an accomplished fact. The style is most affected and wanting in sincerity. The following lines, sent to Mr Alex. Davison, will serve as an example of Emma's poetic Muse.

Clarges Street,
January 26, 1805.

I send you some of my bad verses on my soul's idol. . .

EMMA TO NELSON.

I think, I have not lost my heart;
Since I, with truth, can swear,
At every moment of my life,
I feel my Nelson there!

If, from thine Emma's breast, her heart
Were stolen or flown away;
Where! where! should she my Nelson's love
Record, each happy day?

If, from thine Emma's breast, her heart
Were stolen or flown away,
Where! where! should she engrave, my Love,
Each tender word you say?

Where! where! should Emma treasure up
Her Nelson's smiles and sighs?
Where mark, with joy, each secret look
Of love, from Nelson's eyes?

Then, do not rob me of my heart,
Unless you first forsake it;
And, then, so wretched it would be,
Despair alone will take it! *

In the meantime, the hope of a speedy return, filled the hearts of the two lovers. But it was not until August

* *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, vol. ii, supplement, p. 127.

1805 that Nelson was able to return to Merton, and enjoy, in the company of Emma and his daughter, the rest of which he was sorely in need after a severe cruise that had lasted two years. He was enjoying life in this peaceful retreat, when suddenly, on September 2, he received intelligence that the French and Spanish fleets were before Cadiz. Immediately he became gloomy and preoccupied.

"You are worried," said Emma.

"No," he replied.

"Yes, Something is on your mind. I know you too well to be deceived. And I will tell you what it is. You are longing to get at the enemy. You consider that they belong to you and you would be unhappy if another were to fight them in your place It is your right, and you deserve it in recompense of your long cruises in the Mediterranean."

In a sudden burst of eloquence, she gave utterance to sentiments she had not often indulged in. By associating with the distinguished men who came to Merton, she had caught some of their moral elevation, and it really seems that, on this occasion, she only considered the welfare of her country, and the glory of her lover. Although her own interests were so closely connected with Nelson, no selfish thought marred her generous impulse. She advised him not to lose one single moment, but to ask the Government to put him in command of the British fleet.

"He looked at her for a few moments in silence, and then the overflowing heart burst forth: 'Brave Emma, good Emma! If there were more Emmas there would be more Nelsons; you have penetrated my thoughts, I wish all you say, but was afraid to trust even myself with reflecting on the subject. However, I will go to town.' "*

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 197. It is doubtful whether these words were ever really uttered. They convey the impression that Nelson was vainer than he really was. As they were reported by Emma herself, in a letter written to Hayley the poet, on January 29, 1806, we may doubt their authenticity, knowing as we do, how fond she was of boasting.

Before leaving Merton, the Admiral went and knelt by Horatia's little bed, and prayed fervently; Lady Hamilton was weeping. Lord Minto witnessed this last scene. It was he, who, after having expressed his admiration of Emma's attitude, surely the most beautiful one she had ever taken, remarked that Nelson was in some ways a truly great man and in others a child.

Nelson left immediately. A few days later, Emma wrote to him, but the Admiral was dead before the letter reached Trafalgar.

DEAREST HUSBAND OF MY HEART,—You are all in this world to your Emma. May God send you victory, and home to your *Emma, Horatia, and paradise Merton*, for when you are there it will be paradise. My own Nelson, may God prosper you and preserve you . . .*

On the morning of Trafalgar, in sight of the united fleets of France and Spain, Nelson wrote the following prayer, which his patriotism filled with the most noble and elevated sentiments.

PRAYER.

May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct, in any one, tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen.†

After having turned his thoughts to God and his country during the moments which he knew might be his last on earth, Nelson's thoughts went out to the woman who was all to him in life. Knowing that he might fall in the

* Morrison MSS., 845.

† Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 518.

terrible struggle that was about to take place, perhaps with some presentiment of his coming end, he wished to provide for the material welfare of the woman whom he considered his legitimate wife. With these thoughts on his mind, at this most solemn moment, he wrote in his cabin the following codicil to his will:

October 21, 1805, then in sight of the combined fleets of France and Spain, distant about ten miles.

Whereas the eminent services of Emma Hamilton, widow of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, have been of the very greatest service to our King and country, to my knowledge, without her receiving any reward from either King or country:—first, that she obtained the King of Spain's letter, in 1796, to his brother, the King of Naples, acquainting him of his intention to declare war against England; from which letter, the Ministry sent out orders to then Sir John Jervis, to strike a stroke, if opportunity offered, against either, the arsenals of Spain or her fleets. That neither of these was done, is not the fault of Lady Hamilton. The opportunity might have been offered. Secondly, the British fleet, under my command, could never have returned the second time to Egypt, had not Lady Hamilton's influence with the Queen of Naples, caused letters to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the fleet being supplied with every thing, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse, and received every supply, went to Egypt, and destroyed the French fleet. Could I have rewarded these services, I would not now call upon my country; but as that has not been in my power, I leave Emma, Lady Hamilton, therefore, a legacy to my King and country, that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life. I also leave to the beneficence of my country, my adopted daughter, Horatia Nelson Thomson; and I desire she will use, in future, the name of Nelson only. These are the only favours I ask of my

King and country, at this moment, when I am going to fight their battle. May God bless my King and country, and all those who I hold dear. My relations, it is needless to mention, they will, of course, be amply provided for.

NELSON AND BRONTE.

Witness: HENRY BLACKWOOD.
T. M. HARDY.*

Nelson was killed on board the *Victory*, by a musket ball fired by a sailor on board the *Redoubtable*. As he was carried to his cabin in a dying condition, his thoughts were entirely absorbed by Emma and Horatia. He spoke in the most pathetic manner to Captain Hardy, who had commanded Nelson's flagship, the *Foudroyant*, in 1799, and had been in command of the *Victory* since 1803. "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton if she knew my situation . . . Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton. Hardy, take care of poor Lady Hamilton—Kiss me, Hardy." Then he begged the chaplain to give a lock of his hair and his belongings to Lady Hamilton. Her name was constantly on his lips as he uttered the broken, panting words: "Remember Lady Hamilton." "Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter, Horatia, as a legacy to my country." "Never forget Horatia." Then his voice died away in the roar of two thousand cannon.

Nelson died at the very moment when his marvellous genius had covered himself and his country with immortal glory. In this sublime moment, his heart still overflowed with boundless love. But there is less cause to admire the woman who could call forth such a passion, than the wonderful affection of the man. It is Nelson who is the pathetic figure, not Emma. To understand this passion, it must be remembered that the degree of affection which we are capable of feeling is entirely a matter of temperament, and, to a great extent, inde-

* Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 518.

pendent of the object of our love. Thus it often happens that a person, whose nature is cold and irresponsive, is violently loved by one whose amative faculties are so great that he loses all discernment and becomes blind to the real character of the beloved one.

At the news of Nelson's death, Emma displayed the most violent grief. Her sorrow may have been sincere, but it was not deep, and certainly did not last long. She was proud to think that she had been loved by the hero for whom the nation mourned. This thought soothed her grief, and her vanity soon got the better of her regret. She did not weep longer over the lover than over her husband. Even Mrs Gamlin, who treats her with great indulgence, writes: "Unfortunately, at this period of her history, she fell a victim to her own inordinate vanity, extravagance and love of society. A friend of the Merton *coterie* was one day hailed from a carriage window in one of the London streets, and he recognised the voice as that of Lady Hamilton, who requested him to return home with her for dinner. Being engaged for that evening, he went down to Merton next day, expecting to find himself the only guest. His astonishment was great on his arrival to see an assemblage of visitors, including Signor Rovedino and Madame Bianchi."* So it would seem that Nelson's death did not greatly affect Lady Hamilton. Nevertheless, she replied in a heart-broken strain to the letters of condolence that reached her. To George Rose, Vice-President of the Board of Trade, she wrote: "My heart is broken. Life to me is not worth having; I lived but for him. His glory, I gloried in; it was my pride that he should go forth; and this fatal last time he went, I persuaded him to it."†

In consequence of Lord Nelson's death, Lady Hamilton's income was immediately reduced, but she did not curtail her expenses. She liked to keep open house, and, in spite of her mourning, continued to entertain just as she had done when Hamilton died. She went on spend-

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 228. † *Diaries*, vol. i, p. 244.

ing without stopping to count or to worry about the debts that accumulated on all sides. In a short time she found herself in very embarrassed circumstances. The yearly income of £700, bequeathed to her by her husband, was distrained, and the Government showed no inclination to provide for the woman and the child Nelson had left to the care of his country. However, Lady Hamilton was convinced that, sooner or later, the State would give her assistance, consequently she did not curtail her expenditure, and every day her position became more involved. At length she became anxious. On September 7, 1806, she wrote to Dr Scott, chaplain of the *Victory;* after repeating, as was her wont, the words which she attributed to Nelson: "If there were more Emmas there would be more Nelsons," she went on: "I hope you will come there [Merton] on Saturday, and pass Sunday with me. I want much to see you: consult with you about my affairs. How hard it is, how cruel their treatment to me and Horatia. That angel's last wishes all neglected, not to speak of the fraud that was acted to keep back the Codicil."*

The fact was that, although England would grant a pension to the widow of an officer killed in action, she could not provide for his mistress or any other persons designated in his will. The Government did not see fit to make an exception even in the case of the hero of Aboukir Bay and Copenhagen, who died in the very act of winning a glorious and brilliant victory for his country. But none can deny that she injured herself in their eyes by keeping open house after Nelson's death. No doubt the men in power were disgusted by conduct that proved she had no true love for the hero, and had simply fooled him into believing she worshipped him. But for this behaviour she might perhaps have been granted some subsidy drawn from the secret service funds.

In the meantime, Lady Hamilton had given herself up to vain delusions, whereby weak souls are led astray in

* *Dispatches,* vol. vii, p. 394.

difficult circumstances. She found herself balked of the hopes she had founded on the codicil written on the morning of Trafalgar, the result of which she had imprudently forestalled. When her expectations were frustrated, she was obliged to draw in her expenses. She left Merton and returned to London in September 1806. First she lived in Bond Street, and then in Hill Street.

Faithful to her principle of remaining on good terms with everybody, Lady Hamilton had, from various motives, kept up friendly relations with Charles Greville. Besides, having been his beloved mistress and sincere friend, she was also his aunt. There had only been one little cloud in all their intercourse, when, after Hamilton's death, Emma had been somewhat aggressive, as though she would have liked to pick a quarrel with him when settling their money matters. But with his usual courtesy, Greville had dispelled this slight misunderstanding by convincing his aunt that he meant to respect her interests. They had since been on very cordial terms, as may be seen from a letter written by Emma in 1806: "Horatia is well, and I think you will be pleased with her education." Evidently, the former lovers were quite friendly towards each other—or affected to be so—and Emma felt that Greville was interested in Horatia and accordingly sent him news of the child from time to time. It was characteristic of Emma's strange want of reflection to talk of Horatia to the nephew of the husband she had betrayed. But she considered it such an honour to have been Nelson's mistress! She felt as proud of it as she might have been had she contracted some high and influential marriage.

Charles Greville did not live to be a very old man. He died on April 23, 1809, and was succeeded by his brother the Hon. R. Fulke Greville, who was to pay to Emma the income left to her by Sir William.

It was not Greville's death that suggested thoughts of her own end, for she had already drawn up her will in 1806. In the year 1808, she made yet another in which

she expressed a wish to be buried in St Paul's, near Nelson's tomb; regretting that Sir William Hamilton could not repose beside them, as the King had granted him a public burial. If St Paul's were debarred her, she elected to rest beside her mother, to whom she wished a long life and bequeathed all her fortune until, by her death, it would devolve on Horatia. She still persisted in ignoring her first-born child. The latter, who suffered by this neglect, asked to be acknowledged, "but the avowal would entail too much risk. . . Whether mother and daughter ever met again in this world is unknown."*

This is a terrible and crushing sentence on the woman who had shaken off the burden of duties towards her child, and refused her a mother's love, because its presence or existence, had it become known, would have interfered with her plans. Mrs Gamlin adds that it is not known when or where her daughter died. This is another heavy accusation against the heroine.

Towards the end of 1809 Lady Hamilton went to live in Albemarle Street, London. From this moment, onwards, life possessed little pleasure for her. She had placed some hope in the old Duke of Queensbury, a relation of Sir William Hamilton. She cherished the plan of getting him to marry her, or, at least, of inheriting his immense fortune. With this end in view she flattered the vices of the aged libertine and practised all her wiles on him, as she had done with all her lovers. But the old sinner was not as naif as Hamilton; he demurred, and would not be led to the altar. When he died, Lady Hamilton had a great disappointment. She had believed she would inherit all his wealth. And lo! In his will, he had left her only £1,000. London laughed, but Emma wept tears of rage.

Her notoriety and spirit of intrigue brought her into association with Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the future Leopold I of Belgium, who was then married to Princess Charlotte, who died in child-bed.

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

It appears that Nelson's mistress had grown weary of living by expedients, but was nevertheless haunted by ideas of grandeur, and had not yet given up the hope of retrieving her fortunes by means of her old practices. For this reason she sought to become intimately acquainted with Prince Leopold and stood candidate for the post of his mistress, but her tiny face was now buried in fat, and her figure was huge and had lost all its comeliness. She would no longer deign to love anywhere but in high quarters. But the Prince responded to her advances in such an unprincely way that Lady Hamilton was obliged to retreat. Henceforth she became once more the prey of endless worries, increased by the rebuff she had met with, and which made her feel more keenly the irretrievable decline of her powers of seduction. Then, on January 14, 1810, she lost her mother. Although the maternal instinct was never awakened in Emma's breast, she had always been a good and devoted daughter. Consequently, this fresh bereavement, coming in the midst of the other sorrows that darkened the gloomy twilight of her life, made her feel the loss of her mother more deeply than if she had been separated from her in the days of her triumphant career.

The woman who could sell to a collector that sacred relic, the uniform worn by Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar, torn by the bullet that killed him, stained with his heroic blood, seems to have had little appreciation of the sacredness of memory. However, Michael Kelly relates in his *Reminiscences*, that on one occasion, when Lady Hamilton was present at the performance of a new play, entitled "Hearts of Oak"—(in spite of her poverty, she did not find it necessary to deprive herself of the theatres), she heard an actress, Miss Wheatley, sing a ballad in honour of a dead warrior. Miss Wheatley put so much expression into her performance that Lady Hamilton was much affected. The title alone: "Stay, warrior, stay," made her tremble convulsively, and she begged her friends to take her home. She told them that this song

had put her in mind of Nelson, whom she had urged to join the fleet. But, in all probability, her nerves had much more to do with her emotion than her heart. Considering her theatrical temperament and the fact that all her words and gestures were studied, her actions necessarily fall under suspicion. One is always inclined to think that she was performing an Attitude, and acting for an audience. However this may be, the next evening, she asked the actress to come and sing the ballad to her alone, and chose her as music-mistress for Horatia.*

As Lady Hamilton did not know how to retrench, she became daily more involved in debt. She had always possessed the knack of making use of her friends, so she had no difficulty in persuading the Hon. George Rose, to put before Parliament a project granting her £6,000 or £7,000 from the secret service money. This proposal was rejected by Lord Grenville on the plea that her services had not been secret! As a last resource, Mr Rose advised Emma to appeal to the Prince Regent. So she sent in a Memorial that met with the same fate as the scheme that Mr Rose had laid before Parliament. These successive repulses filled Lady Hamilton with dismay. She had boasted so much of her wonderful services, that Nelson, at length, had become convinced of their importance. A lover is always disposed to believe whatever his mistress says rather than follow his own convictions. As a curious result of the workings of her lively imagination, she herself had become persuaded of their reality and magnitude. She believed most firmly in her merits. She considered herself the victim of a hostile Government, and her heart was filled with bitterness.

On January 5, 1813, she wrote to Sir William Scott, the former chaplain on the *Victory*: "I have been a fool, and am a victim to my too open heart and soul. All I want now is quiet and comfort, and to be enabled to finish Horatia's education. I would sooner give to my country than take from it. But sure some justice should

* Mrs Gamlin, ch. xxiv, p. 241.

have been done me; I wish not for much. I have had as much of grandeur as a person can have; it is not that makes happiness. But why not make comfortable the woman who exerted herself for her country's good."*

At length, being absolutely destitute, Lady Hamilton was forced to leave her apartment. Henceforth she led the life of a hunted animal. First, she took refuge in the house of Mrs Billington, the actress, and believed herself in safety. But her creditors discovered her retreat, and she was arrested and put into the King's Bench prison. A journalist who saw her at this time says that she was still beautiful, in spite of the disfigurement of a double chin. She complained bitterly of the unjust and ungrateful attitude the Government had adopted towards her.† Prisoners detained for debt were not subject to hard rules and were allowed to receive visitors. Emma was even able to invite a friend to dine with her on August 1, 1813, the anniversary of the battle of Aboukir Bay: "Do come, it is a day to me glorious for I largely contributed to its success, at the same time, it gives me pain and grief thinking on the dear lamented Chief, who so bravely won the day, and if you will come we will drink to his Immortal Memory. He could never have thought that his Child and Myself‡ should pass the anniversary of that Victorious day where we shall pass it . . ."§ The poor woman was forgetting that, by her wild extravagance, she alone was responsible for the painful circumstances in which she found herself. She would not understand that one must live according to one's means, and that, if a State regulates its expenses according to its Budget, it is imperative for individuals to keep their expenditure within the limits of their income. Even the time spent in prison did not teach her wisdom. Several months elapsed before she was released, thanks to the efforts of Alder-

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 256. † *Autobiography*, W. Jerdan.

‡ Unconsciously, Emma here admits that she and Nelson were the parents of Horatia.

§ Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, ch. xxv, p. 258.

man Joshua Jonathan Smith, who paid the most urgent debts.

The poor woman would have felt comparatively happy had she been allowed to enjoy some peace of mind after the trials she had undergone. But it was not to be. Her daughter was not much of a comfort to her. At this early age she was as fond of teasing and exasperating people as any full-grown woman might be. On April 18, 1813, Lady Hamilton wrote to her and, after some affectionate words expressed her sorrow that, in spite of advice and remonstrances, she persisted in not responding to the care, that was taken of her. "Look into yourself well, correct yourself of your errors, your caprices, your nonsensical follies, for by your inattention you have forfeited all claims to my future kindness. I have weathered many a storm for your sake, but these frequent blows have kill'd me. Listen, then, from a mother who speaks from the dead! . . . I grieve and lament to see the increasing strength of your turbulent passions; I weep and pray you may not be totally lost . . . Look on me as gone from this world."*

It is impossible to say by what misdemeanour this child of twelve had deserved such a severe letter from her mother.

It seems that Horatia did not improve, and that, at the school where her mother had placed her, she dared to say that she ill-treated her. On October 3, of the same year, she received another letter, still more tragic in tone than the last:

"Horatia, Your conduct is so bad, your falsehoods so dreadfull, your cruel treatment to me such that I cannot live under these afflicting circumstances; my poor heart is broken. If my poor mother was living to take my part, broken as I am with greif and ill-health, I should be happy to breathe my last in her arms. I thank you for what you have done to-day. You have helped me on nearer to God, and may God forgive you . . . I shall . . . get

* Morrison MSS., 1047.

letters from the Boltons and Matchams to confront you, and tell the truth, if I have used you ill; but the all-seeing eye of God knows my innocence. It is therefore my command that you do not speak to me till Tuesday; and if to-day you do speak to me, I will that moment let Col. and Mrs Clive into all your barbarous scenes on my person, life and honnor."*

In common with most women of the 18th century, in England as well as in France, the maternal instinct had never been very much developed in Emma, therefore, the indifference she showed to the child in its early days, may account for her not having been able to control her later on. In those days, it was not the fashion to be a devoted mother. Children were looked after by servants until they were old enough to have governesses, or be put to school. Under this *régime*, the poor little ones knew very little about their parents. There was no reason to be astonished when, as they grew up, they did not show the same respect and tenderness as other children who had been watched over by loving parents, to whom they are all the world, and dearer than life.

It really seemed that the unfortunate woman was to be henceforth pursued by a relentless fate. During her imprisonment, a book had been published under the title of *Nelson's Letters*. Some of these documents had been stolen from her, others had been falsified. Although she had no hand in this publication, and disowned it with the greatest energy, Lady Hamilton was, nevertheless blamed by the Press and her friends. They would not believe her denial. It was well known that she was reduced to all sorts of expedients and, since she had sold the uniform and glorious blood of Trafalgar, it was not unlikely she had made money out of Nelson's letters.

This exposure and the fact that the number of her debts again threatened her with the King's Bench, made her decide to leave England in the beginning of the year 1814, and seek refuge in France, the country she had so

* Morrison MSS., 1051.

much hated, first without cause, and later because Nelson hated it.

On reaching Calais she stayed at the best hotel, instead of taking rooms and living in a more economical way. She knew she could not afford to live there, but that did not matter to her. Emma had not lost the old habits of the women who, being accustomed to live at other people's expense, never deny themselves anything, and take it is a matter of course that they are to have the best of everything and pay for nothing. From the following description it will be seen that the Hotel Dessin was likely to suit her extravagant taste. It is probable that in 1814 it had not changed since the days when, in 1802, an Englishman declared that although the provincial hotels in France were seldom good, the Hotel Dessin at Calais was said to be the largest and best on the Continent. It was run on English lines and deserved all praise. The table was elegantly served and the wines choice. The maids wore caps with flowing pinners and long earrings, and were dressed according to the latest fashion.* In this golden retreat Lady Hamilton at length enjoyed a little peace. It was, however, of a very relative nature, for she was tormented by the pecuniary troubles that lay ahead, and by her anxiety concerning Horatia's behaviour. Judging from Emma's remonstrances, the young girl had not a particularly docile disposition. But, as Lady Hamilton had seen so little of her in her early childhood, and had never taken pains to study and understand her, she may have misjudged her. She was an embittered woman and at no time possessed of much feeling, hence it is quite possible that she did not treat Horatia with that affection and devotion which children detect even beneath the severity of their parents. Did she love her daughter? It must not be forgotten that in matters of affection, children show superior wisdom to grown-up people and love those who love them. They are, what they are made to be, and parents have the children they deserve. In

* See *A Stranger in France*, Sir John Carr.

bitter words, Lady Hamilton complained of her daughter. But her grievance was not justified, for if she were not happy, it was entirely her own fault. Had she been more devoted, more self-sacrificing, the child would have responded to her. She was a selfish mother, and selfish people are never happy.

At Calais, Horatia appears to have given more satisfaction to her mother. Perhaps the change of scenery and the consciousness of their painful position, together with the fact that she was a few months older, had made her reflect. She was a day-boarder at an establishment kept by an English lady, attended by the children of the first families in the land.

Lady Hamilton now looked more leniently on her daughter's misdemeanours, and conducted her every day to and from the school. She took her for walks and was quite surprised to find how much enjoyment was to be got in the regular performance of a mother's duties. Writing to George Rose, on July 14, 1814, she said: "Everybody is pleased with Horatia . . . The General and his good old wife, are very good to us, but our little world of happiness is in ourselves." For once Emma was right. In adversity she learnt many truths, which otherwise she would never have suspected. For the beauty which we see in nature, in people, and in love, exists not in them, but rather in ourselves.

After many vain attempts, the unfortunate woman had, at length, found some real happiness, but it was constantly marred by her pecuniary troubles. She was not even sure of their daily bread. She might have worked, but what was she to do? Besides, such a solution requires a strength of mind and energy, which Lady Hamilton did not possess. So she continued to live on credit, accumulating endless debts, and the poor woman was perpetually in terrible anxiety. In order to economise she had left the hotel and taken small lodgings. A general servant, who was more devoted than well paid, looked after the cooking for the household.

Whatever natural dignity Lady Hamilton may have possessed abandoned her in the course of this succession of misfortunes. The habits of the kept woman got the better of the pride of the Ambassador's wife. Instead of carrying her head high in spite of her poverty, and depriving herself of the servant that was, under the circumstances, a luxury, she soon started begging. In the same letter to George Rose, she wrote:

"If Lord Sidmouth would do something for dear Horatia, so that I can be enabled to give her an education, and also for her dress, it would ease me, and make me very happy. Surely, he owes this to Nelson. For God's sake, do try for me, for you do not know how limited I am. I have left everything to be sold for the creditors, who do not deserve anything, for I have been the victim of artful, mercenary wretches, and my too great liberality, and open heart has been the dupe of villains. To you, Sir, I trust for my dearest Horatia, to exert yourself for me, etc."

These unfortunate money troubles dominated every other consideration in her life, hampering her efforts, poisoning her joys. The unfortunate woman who had handled millions, did not know where to turn for the few pence of which she was in need, and still saw no end to her worries. And yet, she tried every method to replenish her empty purse. She appealed to Charles Greville's heir, Robert, who was to pay to her the yearly income of £700, left to her by her husband. But, on account of her debts, these funds were distrained, and Robert Greville replied that he was helpless, and did not see when this state of affairs would cease.

The anguish of her soul was no less intense than the material worries that beset her. Youth and beauty had fled; rank and fortune had gone from her, and, with them, relations, friends, credit and consideration had vanished into thin air. She keenly felt the need of being supported by those strong affections that never give way. Hamilton and Nelson had spoiled her, and she did not realise she would never again meet two such devoted hearts. She

had not the strongly tempered soul that can face solitude, content with its own inner life. The distress of her mind was the consequence of her money troubles, from which she could not get away, as she had no resource within herself, and no society to make her forget her worries. The emptiness of her soul appalled her, and, she longed to fly from herself. At length, after she had tried to still this moral anguish by the use of wine, alcohol and opium, Lady Hamilton threw herself down at the feet of God. Even in the gay Neapolitan days, she had been struck by the solemn grandeur of the Catholic Church. The sacred music, the harmonious ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice had appealed to her artistic temperament and, in a new and mysterious fashion, thrilled her soul with a sense of the beautiful that owing to a superficial education had until then remained undeveloped. These ceremonies had sown the seed of religion in her soul, and in adversity, they sprang up, shooting out roots. In those days of distress, the sharp biting sea wind, piping through the boughs of the pines and oaks, reminded her of those past sensations, soothing her tortured soul and inclining her heart towards God. Sometimes, when the sadness of all things oppressed her, she would unconsciously follow the gentle call of a little bell, and go into some humble church in Calais, where she remained weeping. The smell of incense, the damp flag-stones, the devout silence of the deserted church, broken only by dull echoes, as well as the triumphant peals of the organ bursting over the festive crowd of worshippers, soothed the weary woman by their mysterious harmony. The church is the usual refuge of the broken-hearted; of those whom life's struggle has torn and wounded. It is a haven for the shipwrecked, that death has not yet released. Lady Hamilton did not stop to consider the Church's teachings. She knelt in a dark and secluded corner. The silent atmosphere of the church, or the sacred music soothed her shattered nerves, and restored to them the peace of which they were sorely in need. Her prayers were best expressed by sighs and

tears. After her devotions, her heart was lighter, and swelled with timid hope. With strength renewed, she went forth to endure the daily struggle against want. Piety is a remedy, some philosopher has said, and it worked on her desolate soul. As for her feeble broken body, no remedy could be of any avail. The poor sinner was suffering from dropsy. A Catholic priest comforted her, by administering the last Sacraments. Like the rest of them, she ended, doing penance, and died on January 15, 1815.

The woman who had been the wife of a British Ambassador, the friend of a Queen, and who had been treated almost like a sovereign in foreign countries, was about to be buried in a common grave, when an English merchant residing in Calais undertook to pay the expenses of her burial. About fifty of her own countrymen accompanied her to the cemetery. A Mr Henry Cadogan was chief mourner. Who was he? It has been suggested that he was the second husband of Emma's mother, but this is unlikely. He had never been seen before, and he would not have chosen this moment for making his appearance. Perhaps he was some relation, some connection, or even a former lover. It is impossible to say, for nothing is known of him beyond the fact that he represented Alderman Smith, one of Emma's last friends.

The same merchant, who had volunteered to defray the expenses of the funeral, heard that the creditors of the deceased intended to detain Horatia Nelson on account of her mother's debts. He at once placed the young girl on board a boat leaving for England. In order to avoid detection, he had taken the precaution of having her put on boy's clothes.* On reaching London, she was taken to Mr Matcham, Nelson's brother-in-law, who took charge of her and gave her an excellent education. Later on, she married a clergyman, named Ward, and died in 1881, leaving several children, who bear in their veins the blood of Nelson and Lady Hamilton—the offspring of a celebrated love.

* *Lady Hamilton*, by W. H. Long.

Emma Lyon died at the age of fifty-one, after having filled this half century with the strange adventures here related. It would require a great deal of complaisance to consider this woman a heroine. Some of our predecessors have attempted to do so. It was impossible for us to follow in their footsteps. Let us acknowledge, however, that, on some occasions, and as though by chance, Lady Hamilton showed herself equal to the position her beauty had raised her to; but she never sustained it long. Her premature death was the consequence of her life. She could not bear up against suffering. A creature of pleasure, she died when life had nothing more in store for her.

THE END

APPENDIX I

LADY HAMILTON'S ATTITUDES

GOETHE, who met Lady Hamilton during his travels in Italy, wrote on March 16, 1787: "The Chevalier Hamilton is still acting as British Ambassador here. After having been so long an art connoisseur and a student of nature, he has found the most perfect expression of both in an English girl who lives with him and is about twenty years of age. She is very beautiful and finely built. He has had a Greek costume made for her and it suits her to perfection. In this garb she lets down her hair, takes a couple of shawls, and goes through a variety of postures, gestures and attitudes, until one feels as though it were a dream. With astounding variety and movement she produces the manifold expressions that thousands of artists have tried in vain to render. Standing, kneeling, sitting, reclining; grave, sad, teasing, sportive, abandoned, resplendent, alluring, threatening, terrified: she is all these in turn, and one attitude is developed from another. For each different expression she knows how to alter the folds of her drapery, and she shapes the same kerchief into a hundred kinds of head-gear. The old knight holds the light during the performance. He has given himself up entirely to the object of his soul's desire. In her he finds the charms of all the antiques, all the lovely profiles of Sicilian coins, even the Apollo Belvedere himself. This much is certain; the entertainment is great. We have already enjoyed it two evenings. This morning Tischbein started painting her."*

Although the praise that has been bestowed on Lady Hamilton's Attitudes, seems to have been very much exaggerated, it is certain that, like Garrick's acting, they must have had great artistic merit, since they made a deep impression on such a genius as Goethe. She produced the same effect on women, who are generally less

* Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, p. 130.

appreciative of feminine talent: "The most graceful statues or pictures do not give you an idea of them. Her dancing the Tarantella is beautiful to a degree." *

The following description of the Attitudes is drawn from the *Remains of Mrs Trench*. "Breakfasted with Lady Hamilton, and saw her represent n succession the best statues and paintings extant. She assumes their attitude, expression and drapery with great facility, swiftness, and accuracy. Several Indian shawls, a chair, some antique vases, a wreath of roses, a tambourine and a few children are her whole apparatus. She stands at the end of the room with a strong light to her left and every other window closed. Her hair (which by-the-bye is never clean) is short, dressed like an antique, and her gown, a simple calico chemise, very easy, with loose sleeves to the wrist. She disposes the shawls, so as to form Grecian, Turkish, and other drapery, as well as a variety of turbans. . . . It is a beautiful performance, amusing to the most ignorant, and highly interesting to the lovers of art. . . . Each representation lasts about ten minutes. . . . After showing her Attitudes, she sang, and I accompanied."

And now for the Countess de Boigne's appreciation: "When she consented to give a performance, she provided herself with two or three cashmere shawls, an urn, a lyre, and a tambourine. With these simple implements, clothed in classical garb, she placed herself in the centre of the drawing-room. She threw a shawl over her head, and let it fall down to the ground hiding her figure entirely. Thus concealed, she draped the other shawls. Then, she would rise up suddenly, sometimes throwing off the shawl, sometimes making it serve as a drapery in the attitude she wished to represent. Invariably, she rendered the most admirable statue.

"I have heard artists say, if they had been able to imitate her, art could not have suggested any improvement.

"Before letting the shawl fall about her, which was the signal of an interlude, she would vary her attitude and the expression of her face, being in turn grave or gentle, merry or severe.

"She sometimes took me as an accessory in forming a group. She would put me in the right position, and place the drapery round me, before throwing off the shawl which concealed us like a curtain. My fair hair was in marked contrast with her magnificent black locks, which she used to great advantage.

* *Life and Letters of the first Earl of Minto*, vol. i, p. 406.

"One day, she made me kneel beside an urn, my hands folded in an attitude of prayer. She was leaning over me, plunged in the deepest affliction. Both of us had our hair down. Suddenly, she drew herself up, and took a few steps backwards, and then seized me by my hair so roughly, that I turned round surprised and somewhat alarmed, whereby I had unconsciously adapted myself to the part I was to play, for she held a dagger in her hand. The passionate applause of the spectators burst forth, in the midst of cries of: '*Bravo la Medea.*' Then gathering me to her breast, as though she would shield me from the anger of the gods, she caused the same enthusiastic voices to exclaim: '*Viva la Niobe.*'

"In this way she drew her inspiration from the antique statues, and, without producing a mere copy, recalled their beauty to the vivid imagination of the Italians, by a sort of improvised representation. Others have tried to imitate Lady Hamilton's talent; I do not think they have done so with success. It is one of those things that is either sublime or ridiculous. Moreover, to vie successfully with her, the performer must be perfectly beautiful from head to foot, and such figures are not often met with." *

Mme. Le Brun, who was in Naples at the same time as young Adèle d'Osmond, future Countess de Boigne, also assisted at these performances, and considered them highly artistic. She does not forget to mention them in her *Mémoires*. "Nothing could be more curious than the facility with which Lady Hamilton could suddenly give to her features the various expressions of joy or sorrow, and personify in the most marvellous fashion, different characters. With sparkling eyes and dishevelled locks she was a most exquisite Bacchante, then suddenly her face would become drawn with sorrow, and she was transformed into a most admirable repentant Magdalene." †

Was it Lady Hamilton who made these performances fashionable? Baroness de Krüdner seems to think so: "These different attitudes that represent tragic or touching situations are an eloquent language drawn from the soul and its passions. When they are performed by persons whose lives are pure and classic, enhanced by wonderful power of expression, the effect they produce is marvellous. Lady Hamilton, who possessed all these precious advantages, was the first to start this sort of perform-

* *Mémoires*, vol. i, pp. 114-115. † *Mémoires* de Mme. Le Brun.

ance, which may be called a truly dramatic dance." (Valérie, Letter xviii.)

Mme. de Krüdner describes her heroine delighting a small circle of friends by this dance, but, it is her own person that she modestly puts forward under the name of Valérie. Mme. Récamier, another woman whose modesty was never at rest unless she could place herself *en evidence*, also learnt the Shawl Dance, and her discreet startled airs and graces took the place of Emma's tragic gestures. To her honour, Mme. de Staël wrote in a note in *Corinne :* "It was Mme. Récamier's dancing that suggested to me the idea of the performance I have tried to describe." And Mme. de Staël's enthusiasm was so great that she also introduced this dance in *Delphine :* "Men and women got up on benches to see Delphine dance. Never have grace and beauty produced such extraordinary effect on a numerous assembly. This foreign dance has a charm, etc." *

* *Delphine*, by Mme. Staël.

APPENDIX II

NELSON'S LETTERS

MRS GAMLIN says that the letters published in 1814 by Harrison, who had stolen them, were in some places falsified. She quotes this example: On August 1, 1803, Nelson wrote: "Hardy is now busy hanging up your and Horatia's picture, and I trust soon to see the other two safe from the Exhibition. You will not expect much news from us. We see nothing."

Harrison, the thief, thus rendered the above: "Hardy is now busy hanging up your and Horatia's picture, and I trust soon to see the other two safe from the Exhibition. I want no others to ornament my cabin. I can contemplate them, and find new beauties every day; and I do not want anyone else." *

Mrs Gamlin next considers *The Thomson Letters*, and rejects them also. But, in this case, her proofs are much less convincing. *The Thomson Letters* were published by Pettigrew in his *Life of Nelson*. Mrs Gamlin notes a curious resemblance between two letters. The first is in Pettigrew, vol. i, p. 411, and runs thus: "I sincerely hope that your very serious cold will soon be better. I am so much interested in your health and happiness, that pray tell me all. You have had a large party."

The second, given on p. 645, vol. ii, is as follows: "I sincerely hope that your very serious cold will soon be better. I am so much interested in your health, that pray tell me all. I delivered to Mr Thomson, Mrs Thomson's message and note. . . ."

Certainly this coincidence is strange. But perhaps the first letter was to be shown, the second to be kept secret. It is also possible that there was only one original letter, which the first editor published in part. Pettigrew may then have copied No. 2, from the manuscript without noticing that he was reproducing the same document.

* Mrs Gamlin, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

A more serious consideration, however, lies in the fact that, according to Mrs Gamlin, the manuscripts of *The Thomson Letters* have disappeared, and that, when Pettigrew was asked to produce them, he gave no answer. It stands to reason that these manuscripts must exist. If they cannot be traced, they must be considered forgeries.

APPENDIX III

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH OF LADY HAMILTON

ANNO Domini, 1815, January 15, dame Emma Lyon, aged fifty-one years, born in Lancashire, England, living in Calais, daughter of Henry Lyon and Mary Kidd, widow of William Hamilton, died 15th January 1815, at one o'clock p.m., in the house of Damy, rue Française.

A. D. 1815, janvier 15, dame Emma Lyons, âgée de 51 ans, née à Lancashire, à Angleterre, domiciliée à Calais, fille de Henri Lyons et de Marie Kidd, veuve de William Hamilton, est décédée le 15 Janvier 1815, à une heure après midi au domicile du sieur Damy, rue Française.

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